









# **LIFE AND DEATH.**

“What is that *Life* which keeps us from the dead ?  
And whither hold our *Souls* their mystic way  
When from their mortal mansion they have fled ?  
Sleep they as senseless as their mould’ring clay ?  
Can they feel joy, or woe, and need they lodgement  
Ere bodies rise up at the day of judgment ? ”

Hades, or the Next World.

**MORTAL LIFE ;**  
**AND**  
**THE STATE OF THE SOUL**  
**AFTER DEATH ;**

CONFORMABLE TO DIVINE REVELATION,  
AS INTERPRETED BY  
THE ABLEST COMMENTATORS,  
AND  
CONSISTENT WITH THE DISCOVERIES OF SCIENCE.

BY  
A PROTESTANT LAYMAN.

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“ Man now should learn what God permits to know  
Of future scenes which other worlds shall show ;  
For though this dwelling or his soul must fall,  
He feels that life on earth can not be all.”  
*The Life of the Soul.*

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**LONDON :**  
**SMITH, ELDER, & CO. CORNHILL.**

MDCCCXXXIII.

*“There is no question that can be propounded of such universal and absorbing interest as this:”—“Compared with it all other inquiries sink into absolute insignificance.”*      British Critic or Theological Review. No. XI.

TO

**TWO DEPARTED SPIRITS;**

**WHOSE LEAVING THIS WORLD**

**GAVE RISE TO THE FOLLOWING INQUIRY**

**REGARDING THE STATE OF THE DEAD,**

**AND THE FUTURE CONDITION**

**OF THE HUMAN RACE,**

**THIS WORK**

**IS DEDICATED,**

**IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE,**

**BY THE AUTHOR.**

—“He discoursed on the nature of the soul,—and the wonders of another life more mysterious even than this.”      *Life of Sobieski, King of Poland.*

“For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

*Heb. xii. 14.*

# ERRATA.

Page 23. In 2d line in note, *for* nations *read* notions ;

131. — line next bottom of page, *for* band *read* Bard

528. — 9th line, *for* than *read* that (only in a few copi





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“ Can we forget that soon our race is run ?  
That then we nought may see beneath the sun ?  
We can,—or lightly think it distant far,  
The time when death shall end our earthly war.  
The loveliest face grows old, and sparkling eyes  
Which warm men's hearts, become the tyrant's prize.  
Strength must decay, and frames now strong and sound,  
Now brisk and gay, shall lifeless press the ground,  
Remember then, my soul, time quickly flies,  
And thou shalt leave this body when it dies ;—  
Whither ?—Ah ! think thee of this *now* when life  
Gives hopes of conquering in th' important strife.”

ANON.

## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

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To contemplate in idea the realities of that futurity which lies beyond this quickly passing scene, by considering the revelations which God has communicated to us of life in other regions beyond the earth, and combining what Scripture discloses with the knowledge of the universe which its Author has led us to acquire in these latter times, is to exercise most beneficially to ourselves, one of the noblest intellectual faculties of Man. The discovery of our own insignificance in the scale of creation tends to humble our pride—the conceptions we may be enabled to form of eternal life will stimulate us to prepare for it, and to bear up under the miseries of the present,—while a study of the material works of that Almighty Being who presides over all, will raise our adoration of his power, wisdom, and beneficence : their connexion, also, with our eternal pleasures being undoubtedly more than is generally imagined.

The buoyant spirits of youth may in some little degree excuse a thoughtlessness of that awful change which our nature must undergo, and the deeming it a distant prospect, more particularly when we feel delighted with this earth ; but Death lurks beneath even the gayest spring flowers of

life, as well as under the blighted boughs of ~~other~~ years,—often concealing his pitfalls where they are least suspected, while the wariest and most careless—the youngest and the oldest fall indiscriminately into them, although not equally unprepared. Mature age has not even the shadow of excuse for delaying to think on the nature of our beings—or the transient tenure by which we keep our place amidst earthly doings. When all, then, must, sooner or later, bid this world adieu for ever, to plunge into an unexperienced state—it is amazing that so few, while here, make the attempt to discern, with the mind's eye, what lies behind the clouds which rest between this world and the next, when this may be done by the aid of those rays of light which shine on our souls (unnoticed by the crowd) to lure to brighter scenes all those who bear in mind that this world is only the place where, like ephemera, we flutter but for a day.

—“Here was the scene of their transient gaiety and loveliness ; here were the very traces of their elegance and enjoyment, but what and where were they ? Dust and ashes ! tenants of the tomb ! phantoms of the memory !”<sup>\*</sup> So thought an esteemed modern author, as he looked around him among the ruins of the Alhambra palace.—And ought we then to think thus of the dead ? The warmest feelings of our nature answer, “No ! no !” Although, as the former inhabitants of the earth *were* during their mortal lives—they now *are not*, yet, *as beings*, may they not still live in consciousness and social intercourse, although in some other region ? or is the soul incapable of existing without the body ? This is one great truth to be ascertained in the doctrine of Im-

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\* The Alhambra, by Washington Irving. 1832.

mortality, and it is not beyond our power of solving, if we will rely on the plainest sense of the words of inspiration.

Before entering, however, on the principal object of this work—*our future state of existence*, it will be proper to consider the nature of man from the period of his formation in Eden, until death removes him from the sight of those living upon earth. This will lead us to a preliminary knowledge of what that change really consists in : we shall then endeavour to trace the flight of the soul beyond its life in an earthly body, both into its temporary separate state, and next, after it shall again have become the tenant of an immortal frame in an everlasting world.

Almost all men believe in a future life of happiness or misery which their souls shall experience after death. Those nations who do not credit the resurrection of changed bodies, or the judgment of the last day, think these states will commence *immediately* upon death, but the Christian world do not agree on this last point of the subject.

The various conflicting ideas which are entertained on that much-disputed question, *the true state into which the soul enters upon death*, and the *seeming* variances, too, between many passages in Holy Writ, (to one text or another of which, the believers in each supposition appeal,) first induced me to investigate the question, by comparing all the information I could find which contributed to throw light upon this mysterious subject ; satisfied that in as far as the Scriptures are concerned, they must, if properly understood, be consistent throughout ; and that it is only our own want of the requisite knowledge that could allow us in any instance to suppose otherwise. We ought not, however, to judge of its true meaning on any difficult point from insu-



lated texts, which may be so explained, if they are not compared together and interpreted by each other, as to appear of an opposite tendency, differing from one another and from truth ; while, by a more extended search, we may be able to bring the whole to harmonize together.

When some, like the present Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Whately, assure us—"that with respect to an intermediate state nothing is revealed to us,"\*—others appear confident that the soul, on leaving the body, goes instantly to the judgment-seat, and from thence, either to that heaven or hell where it is to live throughout eternity;—some believe with the Right Rev. Dr. Law, a Bishop of Chester, that in the interval between death and the resurrection, the soul loses its consciousness, as the body does its life, passing the time in a sleep of insensibility ; and that, as a mere quality of the brain, it lives only while the latter is animated with life, (as several eminent Christian physiologists as well as divines have declared their belief in,) and consequently may be said to go to the grave as well as the body ;—many, who hold that the soul can exist separately from the body, suppose that it sleeps in senseless torpidity somewhere else ;—while another class think it lives in an intermediate state, without losing any of its mental powers, although it can no longer communicate with the external world by bodily organs, and does not go to the place of eternal happiness or of misery until after its reunion with the altered body, and after it has passed the judgment of the great and only day of account.

I little envy the apathetic feelings which can contemplate with careless indifference whether or not the souls of all the

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\* See Essays on some of the peculiarities of the Christian Religion.

dead are at present in the sleep of total oblivion and unconsciousness, and whether ours shall likewise pass ages in the same state. Certainly, if such were the case, our spirits would not be sensible of the passing time, but now that we are alive as men, it has appeared to many learned and pious Christians, a most dismal prospect to rise up ; in the face, too, of such scriptural evidences to the contrary, and I am surprised it has found so many believers, not only among the ignorant, but among the learned and good both of the clergy and laity.

I trust that my readers will join with me in the opinion of the deep importance of the great object of the present inquiry, and will pursue it with that interest and attention it deserves, which, I am convinced, will lead them to be satisfied of the truth of what is brought forward as most agreeable to scriptural doctrine ; or that there is a *Middle State*, in which the disembodied soul awaits that judgment which alone can consign it to eternal happiness or misery, into which it cannot enter until rejoined to a body, changed from its former mortal nature into an immortal one ;—that there is only one time for judgment, which is not yet arrived ;—that it shall be a general one on all human kind, and that, as the earth still holds the bodies of the dead, their souls must consequently be now in an imperfect state as beings ; but, nevertheless, alive and awake, capable of thought and of mental pleasure or woe, and also of communicating with each other ; which belief can and shall be shown to be nowise connected with the Popish illusion of Purgatory.

One great use, indeed, of such an investigation as the following, is, that it enables us to meet and most effectually to overturn the arguments which Roman Catholics bring in proof of this fanciful place of purification for disembodied

souls. It is not sufficient merely to deny its existence, if we cannot by fair reasoning show it to be unfounded, and if we proceed upon the ground of establishing that there is no Middle State at all,—the soul passing directly and instantly—first to the great tribunal, and then, without an interval, to either heaven or hell,—we assert, in the first place, what is contrary to the plainest interpretations of Scripture, and, in the second, are led into inconsistencies and contradictions, and are unable to answer the arguments which clearly establish it. It is artfully endeavoured by Roman Catholics to blend Purgatory and a Middle State together, as if they both must be the same, and could not be disjoined; which opinion, too many Protestants heedlessly adopt. A Middle State is plainly admitted by the Church of England, and many of her most erudite divines have proved its existence beyond the possibility of denial, by fair and scriptural arguments, proceeding from a competent knowledge of Holy Writ in its original Hebrew and Greek. Several eminent teachers of the Presbyterian Church have also come to the same conclusion, after the most critical and able examination of the Sacred Records, and their works are now read by all students of divinity who endeavour to obtain a necessary acquaintance with the language of Revelation. I allude here to one work in particular,—the very Rev. Principal Campbell's translation of the Gospels, with his preliminary dissertation on the two scriptural Greek words *Hades* and *Gehenna*.

The subjects here considered are too deep, and mystical for any one man to treat of them all so as to do them justice, trusting entirely to his own abilities, nor has it ever been attempted, and the unsupported opinion of any com-

mentator on Scripture could not be entitled to that respect and deference which the concurring testimony of *many* must carry along with it.

I readily acknowledge my own incapacity, and, sensible of the presumption of such an attempt on my part, I have consulted the most able theological scholars, philosophers, and learned men, whose writings will be found, in the following pages, to explain and defend their several opinions and tenets, while these are most impartially tried by Scripture, Reason, or Science. The *opinions* of an author derive weight from his character, knowledge, and celebrity, but his *arguments* ought to be weighed by their intrinsic perspicuity and solidity alone. A person, after a long investigation into any disputed doctrine, has no right to expect that he shall also convince others of the conclusions he has come to, by laying before them a mere summary of his labours, however satisfied he may be of it himself. It is not enough ~~ably~~ to support a doctrine, but every opposing one must be shown to be wrong, in order to ensure conviction even with some who are open to it. Were any of the plausible arguments of an opposite tendency omitted to be examined, some of them might ultimately impose on those who are apt to form their ideas either from the researches or gratuitous opinions of others whom they may think more learned than themselves.

When noticing so many facts and opinions, it would have been extremely difficult in all instances, to have scrupulously distinguished every line or expression which was not entirely original, and the inquiry was prosecuted for a while without any view to publication, so it afterwards became almost impossible to make up for some omissions of this nature, but to my readers, these will be of little consequence,

since ample reference to authorities is made on every point of importance.

It may be objected to some parts of the present work, that after establishing a particular doctrine, both by arguments and quotations from several authorities, the subject is sometimes still further pursued, both by continuing the arguments, and by references to other authors. It should, however, be remembered by those who may think so, that although one person may be convinced by certain arguments, another may not. One reader may hold a favourite author good or conclusive authority, while another at first, does not, but nevertheless may be at last satisfied by reference to the opinions of those on whom he places more reliance, and every reader must be sensible of the advantage furnished to him, *as a means of judging for himself*,—the having placed before him the very expressions of an author referred to, even although his details are abridged, if there hence arises no misrepresentation of his meaning. Very little argument will be held sufficient by those who before had similar opinions; but all that has been urged may not carry conviction to the minds of those who have long been strongly of a contrary belief. Those, for instance, who believe that the soul does not become insensible after death, may think the facts referred to, and the arguments here used in support of this truth, pursued too far, (although a knowledge of our condition for perhaps thousands of years rests on this point being established;)—while those who have already given the most positive assurances to the world, either that it does sleep without consciousness, or that we can know nothing certain about it, may insist that all which has been said, does not change their previous ideas. Repetition in some degree is unavoidable from the nature of the work, but it will always

be found, that where the same ideas recur, they lead to the same conclusions by a variety of reasoning and illustration ; the same plan having also been pursued by many eminent authors. Even if the various opinions and modes of reasoning by which different men have arrived at certain conclusions, with the inferences they drew from particular facts, and the diligent research they made, added little to our conviction on certain doctrines,—still, it must be of considerable importance to become acquainted with their writings on questions which have been so differently understood as those here discussed, and from these pages being intended not only for the learned, but also for the unlearned, each point of importance cannot be rendered too plain. I have not thought it necessary always to treat the subjects referred to, in the manner usually done, and with some readers this may be held wrong, but it may attract the attention of others who would have soon shut an uniformly grave and prosaic book : instruction, too, conveyed in verse, is sanctioned by high authority, and is generally best remembered.

In truly interpreting many passages of Holy Writ, there is a most extensive critical knowledge necessary, not only of their original languages, but also of the opinions, customs, and degree of knowledge which prevailed when our Sacred Records were first written. To become acquainted with all this, we must have recourse to those who have made these subjects the study of their lives. There are some self-sufficient Christians, who, with the English translation of the Bible in their hands, think there is nothing in it beyond their own capacities to understand ; and that they (with those who agree with them on disputed points) are the only people who see the truth, being greatly astonished at the blindness of all others on what to them seems so plain.

With such, I fear, it would be useless to argue, if we were of an opposite opinion, for it would be without the hope of convincing.\*

We are directed to “search the Scriptures,” and in doing so, we find some words and phrases which relate to a future state, on a proper understanding of which, the sense of very important passages entirely depends; and yet it has been said to be of no practical consequence or profit to inquire into some of these matters, because we ought to rest satisfied with the general knowledge, that if we do well here, we shall be happy hereafter,—that we ought to leave every thing else uninvestigated,—that after death we shall know all which now we are in doubts of; and if the soul shall then sleep unconsciously until the last day, that we cannot prevent it by any study, but ought to be contented with implicitly entrusting our fate to the Almighty. I cannot agree that there are passages in the Bible which it is of no benefit for us to understand; as when, for instance, the prophets make use of the Hebrew word *Sheol*; when our Lord and his Apostles speak of a place which they denominate *Hades*, and of another which they call *Gehenna*,—whether they mean the same or different situations. Whether they considered *Paradise* or *Abraham’s bosom* synonymous with the place which they designated the *Highest Heaven*,

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\* The translation of the Bible now in common use with us is about 220 years old. “From the mutability of language, the variation of customs, and the progress of knowledge, several passages in the Bible require to be newly translated, or to be materially corrected.”—“The correction of several passages would deprive Deists of many of their objections, prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions, and be the means of making the Scriptures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world.”

that now unseen *Holy of Holies*, where the accepted of God are to experience their eternal happiness,—or, as their countrymen the Jews did ; who, by the two first names, referred to a place in the Middle State, where the disembodied spirits of the saints await the resurrection and judgment on the last day. Can it tend to no good end, our endeavouring to discover in some texts whether the inspired writers spoke of the *immortal soul*, or of the mere *animal life* of the body ; or if in others, they used only metaphorical language, or intended their words to be taken literally ? The ignorant are generally insensible of their own ignorance ; always, at least, of the *extent* of it ; but the biblical scholar must be fully aware of the difficulty now in sometimes discovering the true meaning of the Sacred Writers, although it may have been perfectly plain to those with whom their mode of expressing themselves was familiar. “Searching the Scriptures,” does not merely imply a simple, straight-forward perusal, but also a comparison of different passages, in order to elucidate the meaning of what is obscure, or not at first clearly evident, and by using every means in our power for finding out the truth in reference to these writings.

To those who have no curiosity or care for these things—who think themselves little interested in them at present, because they may come to know every thing hereafter, I shall only here say further, that many of the best and wisest Christians have shown themselves to be deeply concerned regarding them, holding no part of the inspired writings to be an unprofitable study—an opinion, humbly but strongly concurred in by

A PROTESTANT LAYMAN.

August 25th, 1832.



“LISTEN, whilst I reveal to you the mysteries of spiritual natures; but I almost fear that with the mortal veil of your senses surrounding you, these mysteries can never be made perfectly intelligible to your mind.”—“But prepare your mind, and you shall at least catch a glimpse of these states which the highest intellectual beings that have belonged to the earth enjoy after death in their transition to new and more exalted natures.”

**Consolations in Travel—or Last Days of a Philosopher, by  
Sir Humphry Davy, President of the Royal Society, &c.**

## CHAPTER I.

The Creator of the world, and the formation of our first parents ;—their primeval state ;—the human soul ;—its probable existence in a prior state ;—inferior animals in the garden of Eden liable to death ;—nature of beasts ;—the temptation, fall, and sentence ;—man not created immortal ;—the trees of life and knowledge ;—the form of the Tempter ;—original sin ;—clothing unthought of in a state of innocence ;—inference.

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“Great things, and full of wonder in our ears.”

MILTON.

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IN the Confession of Faith, entitled *The Apostles' Creed*,\* the apparent distinction made between the *Father Almighty* and Him who is there called his only *Son*, leads some Christians to believe that the First alone created the world, as the Second alone suffered mental and bodily anguish on earth after he became a man, laying down to redeem us, the mortal life he had assumed ; and that He who thus became our Saviour, had no share in the creation described in the beginning of the Old Testament. The Son, however, is seemingly distinguished in this Creed, not so much as the Second Person in the Trinity, as in the new character of our Redeemer, and the Church believes that—“the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one.”† That each is called *God* or *Lord*, at the same time that they are, along with the Holy Ghost, but one God or Lord.† It must be

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\* We have no sure evidence of this Creed having been composed by any of the Apostles, but it was undoubtedly adopted by the Christian Church at a very early date.

† Athanasian Creed.

admitted that no christian doctrine is more difficult to our belief than that of the Trinity, because it is so incomprehensible to us ; but being, as we think, distinctly asserted in Holy Writ, we must believe in it, although, in a great measure, beyond our present limited understanding. This last would not in itself be a sufficient reason for doubting it, for we believe that our souls and bodies can act on each other, and yet we cannot comprehend how they are connected.

In the beginning of *The Nicene Creed*, the before-noticed distinction is placed in a still stronger light, and some ambiguity arises in speaking of Christ, where it is said, that he is “of one substance with the Father, *By whom all things were made,*”—which might be interpreted to mean, that the *Father*, in his own person, made all things ; but from what follows, the words here in Italics would rather seem to apply to the *Son*, for it goes on—“who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven,” &c.

In the Rev. Mr. Gleig’s *History of the Bible*, he expresses a very general mode of thinking, when he says—“To the Father we look *as the Creator* and supporter of all things : to the Son, as the Mediator between God and man.” And this he affirms to be one of the distinguishing tenets of the Christian religion.\*

I may cite another instance of erroneous views on this subject, from Dr. Kennedy’s *Religious Conversations with Lord Byron*, where, in one place, the author attributes the creation to the Holy Spirit of God,—*the Comforter* ; (whom we otherwise call the Holy Ghost, the Third person in the Trinity, whom the Father sent to the earth after the Son had left it,†) and three pages farther on, the Persons in the Godhead are distinguished thus : “God *the Creator*, Christ the Saviour, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter.”‡

When an act is said in Scripture, to be done by any of the Persons of the Trinity, the whole of the blessed Three may

\* History of the Bible, Vol. II. p. 324.

† St. John xiv. 26.—xv. 26.—xvi. 7.

‡ Pages 273 and 276.

in one sense be held as engaged in it, although one of them may be the more immediate person who works.\* When, (speaking generally,) *God* is said to be the Creator of the world, the whole Godhead is meant, but it must not be held from the expression, that God *the Father* is alone referred to. The Father willed that the world should be created—the Son (instructed by the Father †) carried this *intention* into effect, and consequently, is properly in our eyes the *immediate Creator*, although, also, the Spirit of God—the Holy Ghost (רוח אלהים *Ruach Elohim*) moved upon the face of the waters—hovered over the new creation, as a bird hovers over her young, which the original properly signifies. In another example which may be adduced, of the acting together of the Godhead—the Son prayed the Father to send the Comforter to his disciples, and this divine Spirit came down to enlighten them; consequently, was the One who, on this occasion, carried the design into execution. Again—the Son (sent by the Father ‡) was He who personally redeemed us, assuming our form and nature for that purpose, and joining it with his own divinity, which partook of his sorrows, and this must evidently have been the case on several occasions, particularly during the agony in the garden. His divine nature was not left in heaven when his human nature was on earth, for he spoke of having *come down* from heaven, and of *returning* to his Father who had *sent* him: both natures, therefore, were conjoined, and the first was shown by the miracles § he did, and the words which he spake ||; being perfect man and perfect God at one and the same time.

It is written in Genesis, that *God* created the heavens and the earth, and that *the Lord God* spoke to Adam; but He who afterwards took our human nature upon himself, is in the New Testament also called *God*, and the *Lord God*: so

\* "My Father hitherto worketh, and I work," St. John v. 17.

† See St. John v. 19.

‡ St. John v. 24, 30, 37.

§ "No man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him," St. John iii. 2.

|| "Never man spake like this man," St. John vii. 46.

even from this, there is nothing against a belief of his having borne a very prominent part in our creation, and actually been the person in the Godhead referred to by Moses as the "I AM" God. On tracing this point through the Old Testament, it soon becomes evident, that it must have been our Saviour who appeared to the Patriarchs and Prophets *as God* on many different occasions; communicating his pleasure to them both when they were awake and in their visions; becoming visible to them under an assumed human form, or merely allowing them to hear his voice.\*

St. Paul directly affirms, in the two following passages, that our Saviour was *the Creator*: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,"† and God—"created all things *by Jesus Christ*."‡ Our Lord is frequently designated in Scripture under the Greek title of *Λογος* (*Logos*), which we translate "*The Word*," as in the commencement of St. John's gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made."§

Christ, therefore, was not only *the Creator* of the world and of man, but our *Saviour* also, and is to be our *Judge* at his second coming on the last day, after our souls shall have again received material bodies.

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the angel Raphael, when relating the creation of the world to Adam, tells him that our Saviour was the person in the Godhead by whose hand the

\* "It was the *Second* person of the ever blessed Trinity who appeared to the patriarchs of old, who talked with Moses from the burning bush, and proclaimed himself the God of his fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; declared that he had surely seen the affliction of his people. It was He who conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, and settled them in the promised land."

From a Sermon by Bishop Walker of Edinburgh, preached at Dundee, 11th Feb. 1810. See also 1 Cor. x. 4.

† Coloss. i. 16.

‡ Ephes. iii. 9.

§ St. John also, in another place, calls Christ—"The Word of God." "King of kings, and Lord of lords," Rev. xix. 13, 16.

work was done ; but I refer to this merely as an instance of a correct scriptural distinction now too often overlooked. In the Argument prefatory to the seventh book, it is said that " God—declares his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein ; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of angels to perform the work of creation in six days :"—In the poem itself, the Father thus addresses the Son :—

" And Thou, my Word, begotten Son ! by Thee  
This I perform ; speak Thou, and be it done.  
My overshadowing spirit, and might, with Thee  
I send along : ride forth, and bid the deep,  
Within appointed bounds, be heaven and earth :"

" So spake th' Almighty, and to what He spake  
His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect."

Heaven is represented as opening her gates

————— to let forth  
The King of Glory, in his powerful Word,  
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.\*

The following passages from one of Bishop Sherlock's Sermons, will farther confirm this interpretation of Scripture :—

" The Scriptures of the New Testament have discovered to us that we are the immediate workmanship of the Son of God, ' by whom all things were made which were made ; being created by him, and for him.' "—" The fall of man was the loss of so many subjects to Christ, their natural Lord under God, *in virtue of his having created them* : the redeeming them was the recovering of them again, the re-establishing his power over *his own* works."—" As we owed to him our first life, so we owe to him our second."—" As Christ was head of the creation, and made all things, so when God thought fit to restore the world from sin, it

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\* The commands of the Deity, mentioned by Moses, as—" Let there be light," &c. are all attributed in *Paradise Lost*, to our Saviour, and certainly ought to be so considered.

pleased him that Christ should be head also of this new work, the first born from the dead himself, and the giver of [immortal] life to every believer.”\*

Moses informs us, that man was created in Eden ; sometime after which, God prepared a delightful residence for him to the eastward, upon the banks of a river, which took its rise in the same country. How long Adam lived by himself in Eden, or how he was employed before *the garden* was ready for his reception, we are not told. Some authors have endeavoured to point out still, the exact situation of this earthly paradise, but it is probable that its site is covered by the waters of the sea, as a vast extent of antediluvian dry land is now beneath its waves, while a great deal of what we inhabit must then have been under water, as geological researches show.†

Several Biblical commentators‡ speak of Eve as living with Adam before either was in this blissful residence, but it would seem from the second chapter of Genesis, that our general mother was formed from a part of Adam's body, *while he was residing in Paradise*, and after he had there named all the beasts ; at which time, “there was not found an help meet for him.” In Paterson's “*History of the Church*,” the author observes—“Although the sacred historian does not particularly mention the formation of Eve until some time after that of Adam, yet there is not the least doubt that they were both created *on the same day*. This indeed evidently appears from the relation of the works of the sixth day, Gen. i. 27. where, after the words, *God created man in his own image*, it is added, *male and female crea-*

\* Discourse LI. See Valpy's “Divines of the Church of England,” Vol. III. pp. 11, 12.

† The Reverend author of a well known little work, entitled *The Rectory of Valchead*, says that—“In a garden the first man was born ;” (page 183,) but Adam was *born nowhere*, and was not even created in a garden, although the first woman began her life in one, and it may be said, that both our first parents *died before they were born*.

‡ See Gleig's History of the Bible.

*ted he them.*''\*—The latter part of the verse, however, does not necessarily imply that Eve was immediately formed after Adam, or *on the same day*, as the male and female of the other living creatures were, but refers to the *after* creation of an help meet for him, when God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. A part of the verse, too, is omitted by Mr. Paterson, or, "*in the image of God created he him,*" which adds to the probability of the formation of the man alone at that time. The formation of the female, then, when first mentioned by Moses, seems *prospective*, which is the only way of rendering it consistent with the account of her creation in the second chapter. The division of Scripture into chapters and verses, sometimes occasions not a little confusion, from parts being thus disjoined which the writers did not mean to be so. In the instance now under consideration, the first chapter seems to be a summary relation of the whole creation, and the second goes over the whole again, but entering more into the details ;—a mode frequently adopted by the sacred authors. We are, in short, first told that God made human kind male and female ;—then, it is explained that the man was first created—lived in Eden while a garden was preparing for him,—into which after he had been admitted, he had an employment, which must have taken him up a considerable time ; and *afterwards*, that he also received a companion suited to him.

Adam, therefore, was for a while the sole being of human kind on the earth, and he may have been so for months or years before the creation of Eve. The origin of the female was very remarkable, inasmuch as it was totally different from the account we have of that of any other living creature ; all with her sole exception having been taken directly from the earth, as was the body of Adam ; his partner was formed from a part of his living body while he was senseless in a trance ; but God must have communicated the fact to him, since he knew it. It has been objected to this relation that if it had been so, his male descendants would have also



had a rib less on one side, which is not the case ; but this is no solid objection, for children do not inherit such mutilations.

We can find no reason for rejecting a literal interpretation of the Scriptural description of Eve's formation. There can be no doubt that it would have been as easy for the Creator to have taken her outward frame from the ground as it was to produce that of the man's, and of all the lower animals from it. There must therefore have been some strong reason for her being made in quite another way from all the rest of animated beings. What it could have been, we can scarce even conjecture. We are told that there are to be no such unions as marriages in heaven, and we may therefore naturally conclude that the glorified or heavenly bodies of all the saints from the earth shall there be of a like form, although each may be distinguishable by peculiar features. Since we have no cause to believe that the female of any other species was originally taken from the male, none appear to have so close a tie between them as the human kind, who were evidently formed as the sovereigns of this globe, all things on it tending, directly or indirectly, to their subsistence, comfort, or pleasure.

The mortal body of man was formed of the earth, as the inferior animals were, and all bodies are so constituted as to resolve themselves into earth again when life leaves them. Man, we are told, became a *living soul* ; but the original word in the Hebrew (*חיה* *haia*, translated by the Seventy into Greek, *ζωή* or Life) would seem simply to refer to the *animal life*, as it is also used by Moses in relating the creation of the beasts. There can be no doubt but that on man's creation, his body received an immortal soul from God of a much superior nature to that of the beasts, if they (or any of them) have some such intellectual power which actuates them,\* but the only distinction made by Moses, while nar-

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\* Many beasts love, hate, contrive, remember, and acquire knowledge in a certain degree. Are these faculties to be considered qualities impressed upon mere matter ? Some of the best metaphysicians and physiologists,

rating, the animating of Adam's body, is by applying the same word in the *plural* number, to express his becoming a living creature, or soul; as he uses in the *singular*, to denote the same of beasts. The first has been thought by some likely to signify both natural and spiritual life, at least that it may indicate more than mere animal existence. With regard to *the immortal spirit within us*, we know little from this author, but he seems to be alluding to it when he speaks of our being created after *the image of God*, which may mean nothing more than that we were at first formed pure and spotless in our spirits. That the image of God mentioned in the 26th verse of the 1st chap. of Gen. consisted principally in *righteousness and true holiness*, seems evident from Ephes. iv. 24.—“and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,” and from Coloss. iii. 10. “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him.”\*

The tradition of man's being created in the image of God, or of the Gods, was preserved among the Roman heathen till the coming of Christ. Thus Cicero † says—“He who knows himself, will in the first place perceive that he is possessed of something *divine*, and will think that *the mind within him was dedicated like a sacred image*.” And Ovid, who lived till A. D. 17, in still plainer terms, tells us, that *Prometheus*, (that is, the Divine Counsel,) formed man after the image of the Gods who govern all things.

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when reasoning with regard to *man*, entirely discredit the idea of *matter* itself thinking, resolving, &c. How then can beasts often even reason in their own minds, and act in consequence? Thousands of anecdotes in support of this might be cited. Archbishop Tillotson discusses, in one of his Sermons, the question, as to whether beasts have souls, and shows that there can be no difficulty in believing that they have some such immaterial principle, although of a very different nature from that of man—but that it is a matter on which, he says, we cannot decide.

\* The image of God in which man was created, besides what is above stated, has been held to have a reference to the form in which the Redeemer was afterwards to be manifested to the world. See Philip. ii. 6, 7, 8.

† De Leg. Lib. I. cap. 22.

We are still ignorant what manner of spirits we are of ; —whether our souls existed before, or were created at the time when our bodies were ; on which point, the Scriptures are silent, but some obscure passages in them might perhaps lead us to infer, that *we*, that is, *our souls*, had *formerly* existed in a previous state and condition of being : But this we are sure of, both from Scripture and reason, that we have some such nature in our composition, distinct from mere animal life, or animal matter, and that it will continue its conscious existence when the latter is again mixed with the ground.

The existence of human souls in a state *prior* to their entrance into mortal bodies; has been a favourite theory with many, and has been ably supported. They are supposed by some to be those of fallen angels, who by passing through this life are to have another opportunity given to them of regaining heaven by faith and obedience here to the will of God ; but, that none may glory in *they themselves* having regained that region from which they fell, their faith and good works only conduce to give them an interest or participation in the mercy of God, which he has promised to extend to those who believe in his Son, and avail themselves of the merit and reconciliation mysteriously emanating from the sacrifice of his mortal life, and his having been a man as we are, subject to death. The question of the exact nature of the spirit in its supposed former state must be very uncertain even to conjecture, for there may be many orders of spiritual beings of whom we know nothing, and the probability of our prior existence, therefore, does not in the least depend upon our being able or not to describe the particular species of spirits as they were known in that state. I must confess having a great inclination to believe in a prior state, not only from the probability of it, and from no contradiction being to be found in Scripture, but also from several passages which would seem to imply it. God *created* the body of man out of the ground at the time Moses speaks of, and breathed into it an animating principle, the same as the beasts have, (for, as I have before observed, Scripture ap-

plies the same term to both,) but *the immortal soul may have* existed previously. If man, or rather the soul of man, did not live in a former state, then the Almighty *creates* a new soul for every person who is born. There is, in short, a constant creation of souls. Our material frames may continue their kind—similar bodies to themselves, by the delegated power of God, but they cannot be supposed to *create souls*. We commonly believe that God creates *souls* at the time these bodies are produced, which they are to inform. The Jews, on the contrary, think that God created them all at the beginning, and that they come by command of some superior power to join themselves to bodies. When the Apostles saw a man who was *born* blind, they asked their master, if it was by reason of this man's sin, or that of his parents, that he was born blind. Christ did not contradict their idea that a man might sin before he was born into this life, (or, more correctly—that his *soul* might do so,) but merely answered, that it was owing neither to his own sin, nor to that of his parents, but for the manifestation of the power of God. The Lord said to Jeremiah—"Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest out of the womb, I gave thee wisdom."\* The author of the Book of Wisdom says—"Yea rather being good," (meaning comparatively so,) "I came into a body undefiled."† Wherein he manifestly declares himself to have been a *moral agent* in a state prior to his abode *here*. When the disciples were asked by our Saviour—"Whom do men say that I am?"—they answered—"Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, or one of the Prophets." A sufficient demonstration this, that a descent of the human species upon earth *from a prior state*, was a prevailing opinion among the Jews at that time,‡ which Christ seemed rather to acquiesce in,

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\* Ch. i. 5. The above text would seem to imply rather more than the declaration of St. James in the Acts does, where he says—The divine pre-science and omniscience "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," chap. xv. 18.

† Wisdom, viii. 20.

‡ Josephus, *de bell. Jud. Lib. II. c. 12.*

than object to, by only asking them in return—"But whom say ye that I am?" Our spirits came from the custody of God, and will return to his keeping, but whether to the same region or place as formerly, (if souls did before exist,) we cannot tell. The Scriptures uniformly represent us as being only *strangers* and pilgrims on the earth—that heaven is our country, into which we ought to prepare for our *return*; and the early fathers,\* in the first ages of Christianity, held similar language. "Christ," says St. Chrysostom, "leads us *again into heaven*;" giving us undoubtedly to understand that *we had been there before*. St. Basil tells us that we are by sin fallen to the earth, and another early writer assures us that our Redeemer opened the way to our heavenly country, from which all mankind had been banished many thousand years.†

The Essenes ‡ are said to have been the most religious and equitable people under the Jewish law. They believed the souls of men existed in a prior state, and that they shall continue to live for ever;—"that when the appointed moment arrived at which the soul behoved to animate a body, it descended from the highest air, being drawn into the habitation prepared for it by an irresistible natural attraction.

\* There are some who associate all reference to the *Fathers*, (as the early theological writers of the Christian Church are called,) with *Papistical* nations; but it should be remembered that the corruptions of the Romish Church are to be attributed principally to the ignorance and bigotry of the dark ages which arose after Christianity had been established for several hundred years, and it would be arrogating rather too great a superiority for our own penetration to imagine, that at the distance of 1800 years, we now know more of the true spirit of Christianity than those learned and pious men who professed it in the days of the Apostles, and immediately after them. As frequent reference is made in the course of this work to the writings of these primitive Christians, the above remark should be allowed its due weight.

† Laurent. Surii. Homil. p. 379, in die Paschæ.

‡ Besides the two great sects of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the Jewish nation was formed also of two others, the Herodians and Essenes; the latter of whom resided chiefly near Engedi, in the wilderness of Jordan; where, with considerable reason, it is believed that John the Baptist received his early education.

It escaped again from its prison, as soon as the body died, and returned with inconceivable velocity to its abode on high.\*

Adam was free from sin when first placed in paradise, which may be said to be inconsistent with his soul having existed in a former state in which it had sinned ; but there would be no great stretch of imagination (in order to reconcile some Scriptural difficulties) in believing that in this case, God had forgiven all former sin, but perhaps only *conditionally*, when he sent the soul into the mortal body of man ; thus forming a new being, although one of the parts may have formerly existed, and no one supposes that *the body* ever lived before its life here. If the soul had begun its new career clogged with a weight of sin, it could not have been said to have started fair, and it may have been pardoned only on condition of maintaining its purity through a life on earth, until it had been allowed to partake of the tree of immortality. It might not have been thought worthy of regaining heaven at once without a course of probation, after which, it might then have directly and immediately become again an inhabitant of heaven ; an opportunity would thus have been afforded of satisfying the justice of God, at the same time that his mercy was eminently displayed. On finding that man could not thus regain heaven, from his having yielded to the wiles of the great evil Spirit, another mysterious plan was adopted : Our Lord and Creator himself becoming a man, subject to death,—then offering his mortal life for the sins of his fallen, and otherwise helpless and hopeless children and fellow-men.

We are not informed that the fall of man from a state of innocence brought death upon any other species of living creatures, and we have no reason to believe that any alteration was made regarding them on that occasion. There is no reason to think that any of them were created immortal, and we hear of no tree of life placed in their power, no after

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\* Gleig's History of the Bible, Vol. II. p. 225.

life in another state, or continued one in this world, and no sentence of death passed on them,\* or any necessity of removing them from paradise, as there was in regard to man after he had disobeyed. We believe that *carnivorous* birds and beasts were formed along with the others, and were present in Eden while man was in a state of purity. If they were so, death must have even then been known among the creatures on which they prey, as from their very construction, both external and internal, they could not live on the vegetable productions of the earth, or be supposed to exist without food.† “What may be the designs,” says the Rev. Dr. Crombie, “of the great Parent of all being, respecting the inferior creation, whether the present is to be the whole of their existence, or whether they may yet have other purposes to answer even on this earth, than appear to us, we are wholly ignorant. This, however, we may venture to affirm, that, if we have in the phenomena of the human mind evidence sufficient to convince us, that there must be in man a principle not material, which perceives, thinks, and wills, it cannot weaken our conviction, were it absolutely certain, that an immaterial principle exists in none, in some, or in

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\* When the ground was cursed for the sin of man, and it was said that in future it should bring forth thorns and thistles, it has been inferred that in consequence, the condition of all herbivorous animals must have also in some degree been altered for the worse. But the meaning of the denunciation more probably had only a reference to man, and meant that the earth would no longer spontaneously yield him food, and not until he laboured for it. To all browsing animals, and those dependent on its products, the earth still produces food for them of itself.

† The gastric juice in the stomach of every species of animals is adapted to the food they commonly feed on, as directed by natural instinct, and it will generally dissolve no other. Thus, a few grains of corn will make a hawk sick, and the same is the case with almost all beasts of prey, while herbivorous animals cannot digest flesh.

Among the large quantities of antediluvian fossil bones discovered near Montpellier in France, were many of carnivorous animals. Lions and tigers much superior in size and strength to the present living species—animals whose canine teeth are about six inches in length!

See Account by M. Marcel de Serres, in Edin.  
Journal of Science, Ap. 1826.

all, of the inferior creation.”\* If, however, when arguing from natural reasons, we infer that man must have a soul distinct in its nature from his animal frame, because he thinks,—then if it be admitted that beasts can also think and show many of the powers attributed to mind or soul yet without having any immaterial principle within them,—or, that the animal matter of their bodies is endowed with such a power,—it certainly follows that the brain of man may also be endowed with mind as an inherent faculty or power in itself, since in beasts we have an instance of matter being able to act in such a manner. But we have not sufficient knowledge of the nature of beasts to assume that they are actuated by no kind of spirit whatever, and we cannot draw so important a conclusion with regard to ourselves from such uncertain premises. In common language we speak of a horse, for instance, as having a fiery *spirit*, a gentle spirit—a mule, an obstinate spirit—a fox, a cunning spirit, and so on. Is the proverbial wisdom of the elephant the effect of a particular organization of the matter of his brain? It would be a dangerous admission that it is so, for an inference might fairly be drawn by the materialist with regard to the powers of the human brain.

“*The Prince of the power of the air*,”† a great Spirit in rebellion against God, seems early to have directed his attention to ruin the fair creation in the garden of Eden. The unsullied purity of the first pair was soon tarnished and effaced by his wiles, which induced them to disobey an explicit command of God. However small a matter the mere act in itself might be considered, if it is taken literally, yet as a solemn order of their Creator, and in the face of such an awful threatening, it became a serious crime. It was not, therefore, merely eating a certain fruit, even had it been literally so, but was an open opposition to the divine will, an assumption of knowledge like unto that of heavenly beings, which God had chosen to prohibit man from acquiring until

\* Crombie's Natural Theology, Vol. II. p. 375.

† Ephes. ii. 2.



his own gracious time came. The evil spirit spoke truth when he told Eve of the knowledge she would acquire, and God himself acknowledges that both she and her husband had obtained it in consequence of their own deed.\*

Death did not immediately follow, but they were left subject to it, as well as exposed to sorrow and suffering, as soon as they had committed the fatal act, as a direct consequence of the newly acquired and dear bought knowledge, which, indeed, tended, and would very soon have led them to immortality, by prompting them to eat of the tree of life, if they had not been driven from the garden, by which expulsion, the Lord in due time fulfilled his threatenings.

Death, therefore, was the general doom of man in consequence of sin in the first parents of our race.

Adam and Eve were tried by God, and found guilty on their own confession. Sentence was passed on them both, and immediately carried into execution. They were driven from Paradise to be out of reach of the tree of life;—the natural consequence of which was, that their bodies, after lasting about 930 years, became unable to support life any longer, and returned to the earth, while their souls went to the place of separate spirits.† In their sentence were included some minor punishments besides their being left to die. The ground was no longer spontaneously to yield them food without trouble, but for this they were doomed to toil, in order to obtain it, and the woman was at times to suffer bodily pain.

Thus, our first parents, although warned of the certain consequence of disobedience, were yet guilty of it—were tried—sentenced—and their doom at length apparently carried into full effect. We may imagine, as some do, that it included a more terrible punishment, but those who take the Scriptures for their guide, can there find no more than that

\* Gen. iii. 22.

† It is unknown whether Adam or Eve died first, for the death of the latter is not mentioned.

the first man and woman were placed in circumstances which led to toil, sorrow, and a natural death, which last completed their sentence.

This is not the general idea, which includes what in Scripture long afterwards is called *the second death*, or being cast into everlasting torments in the lake of fire *after the resurrection*. I cannot find authority for the latter as having been made applicable at first, but if it shall be thought to have been so, it must surely appear strange that no allusion is made to it, when the other particulars of the sentence are so explicitly detailed.

If, in addition to natural death, the torments of hell were also intended, then this likewise involved the two culprits in a future resurrection of their bodies from the grave,—*in a second trial and condemnation*, all before they could in the revealed course be thrust into hell, which *none* have as yet entered that we read of, but are only, in the first place, *reserved* unto the general judgment, as in the words of a paraphrase, by the Presbyterian Church, from 2 Pet. iii.

“Reserv’d are sinners for the hour,  
When to the gulf below,  
Arm’d with the hand of sov’reign power,  
The judge consigns his foe.”

The hour alluded to, is most distinctly and properly stated by the same Church,\* not to arrive till

————— “When from the clouds  
Christ shall with shouts descend;  
And the last trumpet’s awful voice  
The heavens and earth shall rend.”

LIII. Paraphrase.

Now, the first pair were either condemned to hell fire, or they were not. If they were neither threatened to be so before they sinned, nor were sentenced to it afterwards,—then they most certainly were never intended to go there, but would have for ever remained as natural death changed their

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\* Founding on 1 Thess. iv.

state,—one part of their nature in the earth, and the other elsewhere. From an *eternal* separation of soul and body, however, the atonement of Christ has, or rather, *shall* save them and all their posterity. \* The souls of our first parents must now hope through this atonement that their spirits shall yet be at liberty to leave their present prison-house—become again united to material bodies, and then to be received into heaven, by pleading at the last day the great means of reconciliation between God and man through Jesus Christ.

We understand the sentence on Adam to have been a *general* one on all his race, and all since then have been struck by death, or shall be so until that resistless power ceases. All men also inherit sorrow and toil. It has not been so with regard to the *second death*, and how can it be said that this last mentioned, was also at first included, when none were ever threatened with it but those who continued impenitent and unbelieving sinners? Adam transgressed in a hapless hour, but we do not hear that he was either a hardened or continued rebel; and have no reason to suppose so, but the contrary, and it is only *such, as leave this world in their sins*, for whom hell was ever intended, as far as we can learn.

In the denouncement against the Tempter, we may perhaps now discern a dark intimation, that at a then future time, the sentence of death and its lasting consequences would be recalled and done away. The expiation has been made; but he who brought death upon us will have the power to inflict it until the last trumpet sounds, when man shall die no more by a separation between his soul and body. *When then were men first threatened with hell? (Geh-nom).* I cannot answer the question.

The sin of Adam has descended and tainted all human kind, and the consequence is that all die; but those who shall ultimately be condemned to hell, shall go there for

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\* The separate souls of the greatest sinners shall be again joined to bodies at the general resurrection, and preliminary to the good and bad being ordered to stand before the judgment-seat to receive their respective sentences.

their own sins ; and with this last punishment, I apprehend, *original sin* has not so much to do, as is generally believed by those who wish to throw off the blame as much as possible from their own individual doings.

It has been generally believed that man *was created immortal*,\* but the only reason for the belief is, that sentence of death was pronounced against him for having done what he was warned not to do ; and the inference is drawn, that if he had not been so doomed to die, he would have lived on to all eternity, because he must have been originally of an immortal nature. But this last is not a fair or necessary inference. There was no retraction of a gift given to man, but the *intended* immortality was withheld from him. That the latter was really so intended, appears evident from the tree of life having been placed in his view, and seemingly also in his power, but we have no reason to think he had ever partaken of it previous to his fall ; for God himself, by Moses' account, says, that if man had done so, he would irrevocably have become like unto the heavenly beings, and lived for ever. *If man had been at first formed immortal, then the tree of life would have been of no use, and entirely an unnecessary gift to him, and his partaking of its fruit would have done him no good, in as far, at least, as communicating immortality, if he was immortal without it.*

In a funeral discourse,† Dr. Watts tells us, “that when death seized on man at first, and planted the seeds of mortality in his nature, he then began to be deprived of that peace and health, that vigour and immortality *which he possessed before his fall*, till it at last brought him down to dust.” This is a very different account from what Moses gives us, who mentions no such change as taking place in the bodies of the first man and woman on their fall, and merely that they were allowed no longer to remain where they had the

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\* “I know that at the first,” says Bishop Beveridge, “the body did equally participate of immortality with the soul.”

† In memory of Lady Hartopp.

power to *put forth their hands* and make themselves immortal. Their place of residence only was changed, and the death of their bodies in process of time, was the natural consequence of their original formation from the dust. A slight change may be alluded to with regard to the woman, (and, in so far, to all her daughters,) in Gen. iii. 16, but what is there threatened, is perhaps no more than the difference which even now exists between the females of some migratory savage nations, and those in civilized countries : it is evident from the relation that there was not, at least, so great a change as that of an immortal body being altered into a mortal one.

As the sentence was pronounced on man as a punishment after his disobedience, it would seem, therefore, not to have been originally meant that Adam and Eve should die, although, *as their bodies were created*, it might naturally have followed, that such a structure must wear out and decay by age ; for it appears that it would have *required their doing a certain act* (whatever was in *reality* meant to be understood by *eating of the tree of life*) in order to live for ever : Which act, would probably have produced merely a mysterious change in their bodies, without dying, such as those bodies shall experience which are found alive on the earth at the last day.

It thus does *not* appear, that our first parents were ever in actual possession of immortality, it having been merely a promise to be fulfilled, on certain conditions, at a *future time*. It could not therefore *be taken from them*, but was only *withheld* in consequence of the conditions being broken.

It should here be distinctly understood, that the *mortal* nature of man, is only meant as applying *to his body*. The *soul* was so constituted as to be immortal from the first, and never had a sentence of death, annihilation, or state of temporary torpor in its separate condition, passed upon it, so it must continue alive when the body dies ; but it is properly said that *man* dies, or is subject to death ; for, although the separated soul lives on, yet *man*, as a complete being, has ceased for the time to live or exist ; his soul, when by it-

self, not being in strict language, a man, although, when speaking of a deceased man, his principal part may with perfect propriety be put for the whole, and it is very often done in Scripture, in common writing, and in conversation.

*The tree of life* was planted in the midst of the garden, and Adam and Eve had permission to eat of *all* the trees, except of the tree of knowledge alone. They did not eat, however, of the tree of life ; seemingly, because they had not sufficient penetration to know its power ; but this, the partaking of the other would soon have disclosed to them, and therefore, on their fall, they were immediately removed from paradise.\*

It cannot be supposed, however, since this tree was planted in so conspicuous a part of the garden, (which language must at least indicate that it was something very apparent and easily attainable,) but that it was the intention of God at some future period to have shown that it was placed there for the benefit of man ; particularly as he was not prohibited from eating of it, and it was rendered capable of very great advantage to him, by preventing his body from dying, or suffering decay by old age ; and we may also infer that the immortality it would have conferred, would have included an exemption from all bodily liability to pain and disease. The properties of its fruit might probably, after a long life of purity spent on earth, have been disclosed to him, and he might then have become immortal with a glorified body, such as we still hope to receive at the resurrection. Nearly the same idea is thus expressed by Dean Sherlock :—“We have some reason to think that, although man should never have died, if he had not sinned, yet he should not always have lived in this world.”—“Human nature was certainly intended for nobler advancements, since it was made capable of them. After a long and happy life here, man might have been carried to a heavenly state, without dying, and with his body rendered immortal, as Enoch and Elijah

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\* See Gen. iii. 22—24.

were ; and had all men lived and continued innocent, increasing in numbers, as might have been expected, this earth would have become too small for them long ere now, and its inhabitants could not have subsisted without some of their numbers being taken away into another world." \*

The College of Douay, in their exposition of the Creed, ask—"Had man ever died, if he had never sinned ?" and in answer, say,—“No, he had not ; but had been preserved by the tree of life, and been translated alive into the fellowship of the angels.”† . Which intimates a belief that man must have partaken of this tree *before* he could have been immortal ; being the most obvious meaning of holy writ. The latter part of the sentence seems also to agree with Sherlock's opinion of a probable translation to another place having from the first been intended for man. Instead, therefore, of contemplating death, and speaking of it as we now do, we might in this other far from improbable case, have considered and looked forward to *our change*, as to a happy and wished-for signal, preceding our removal (both in body and soul) to some more beautiful star or planet, to rejoin those who had gone before us, and were living there in superior felicity. As it is, our souls remove in the mean time without bodies, and their re-union may yet be postponed to a distant period ; but souls, even now, rejoin other previously departed souls at death, in the place of separate spirits.

Whatever may be thought of the real nature of the two trees named by Moses, as being possessed of such extraordinary properties, or of the particular manner in which Adam and Eve disobeyed God, this reasoning holds good, and whether Moses uses a metaphorical language or not with regard to them.

God said to Adam—"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"†—or, rather, *become subject to*

\* Discourse on Death.

† Abridgement of the Christian Doctrine.

† Gen. ii. 16, 17.

*death* :—left to die ;—shalt not be allowed to eat of the tree of life, which would have rendered the body of man immortal, as well as his soul ; which last was so from the first. The original does not mean that man should die upon the very day on which he disobeyed, as our English translation would lead us to infer, but merely, on that day God would leave his body still liable to decay and dissolution, without an opportunity of becoming immortal by partaking of the fruit of the tree of life.

In the Book of Revelation, the tree of life is represented as growing *on either side* \* of a river of life, in the new earth which the blest are to inherit, after the present one has passed away ; it “bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month ; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” †

“What this tree of knowledge of good and evil was,” observes Dean Sherlock, “is as great a mystery to us, as what the tree of life was, for we understand neither of them ; which makes some men, who would not be thought to be ignorant of any thing, to fly to allegorical senses : But, although I would be glad to know this, if I could, yet I must be contented to leave it a mystery as I find it. That which we are concerned in is, that this sentence of death and mortality, which was pronounced on Adam, fell on all his posterity.” ‡

If what are called the trees of knowledge and of life, are not to be literally understood as having been actually trees

\* The meaning in the original here is rather obscure, if it be understood that one tree grew on *both* sides of a river ; (literally, on the one side and the other). The most natural inference from the above text, however, appears to be, that in the eternal world there is or shall be more than one tree of life—perhaps many ; as when, for instance, we say that the pine tree grows on both sides of the Mississippi—we mean that many of that species are on each side of the stream. If it shall be said that in fact there may be in heaven no water of life—no river—no trees,—all these being merely used in metaphor, we must admit the possibility of this, but not the impossibility of a literal interpretation.

† Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

‡ Discourse on death.



bearing fruit of the property described, but are to be regarded as mysteries thus metaphorically expressed, then the whole account of them must be an allegory to veil from us the nature of the sin of our first parents. Assuredly, it was possible for divine power to have created a species of fruit so astonishingly endowed, that the eating of it should be able, by its effects in the stomach, to change the nature and construction of the human body, and to render it immortal, as in a far lesser degree, many well known flowers, herbs, fruits, and even pure salubrious air, exert their medicinal virtues on our frames. It must have also been in the power of the Almighty to form and endow another fruit, which, on being partaken of, its surprising qualities should act *upon the mind*, and communicate a previously unthought of knowledge; an effect even more astonishing than the other.\* The *probability*, however, is, that these trees were only *typical* of something else, and are described as vegetable productions only in Eastern metaphor, as many sound divines agree with Sherlock in believing, and that the real details are above our comprehension. Those who are inclined to understand Moses in a strictly literal sense with respect to them, should consider that the sacred writings are full of metaphors, and that from the time of this ancient writer down to the Apostolic age, many religious truths and doctrines were taught by types and parables, which, in particular, was a very common mode with our Saviour. Good and evil *fruits*, for instance, were used to signify good or evil *actions*. “By their *fruits* ye shall know them.” “Bring ye forth *fruits* meet for repentance.” Many passages might be cited where it is far from clear at a first reading, that they were intended as mere *similes*, and yet they are considered to be so.

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\* We have proof, at the same time, that some things taken into the stomach have a great effect upon the mind. Many men can rouse their mental faculties to a much greater degree of power and ability by strong drink than in their ordinary state, and under this excitement are capable of a far increased eloquence, wit, and invention.

The guise under which the Devil appeared to Eve may be termed by some but mere unprofitable curiosity, but every particular connected with the fatal temptation of our first parents, and original sin, ought to be held highly interesting in the early history of our species, and also because we may be able to refute the unbelieving inferences which learned scoffers attempt to draw from the common interpretations of the text in our inspired record.

It is evident that it could not have been any species of *earthly serpent* that could speak, or with dumb fascination have tempted Eve, and Moses does not say, even that the spirit of the devil entered into such a reptile for that purpose. *The serpent*, in this account, seems indisputably only an epithet for the evil one himself, as our Lord called Herod *a fox*, and the Jews *serpents*,\* *a generation of vipers*,† of *their father the devil*,‡ and God's denunciations against the Tempter are only metaphorical threatenings of future punishment; for serpents must have always gone on their bellies, if they are at all like what they were originally; and *eating dust*, or *licking the dust*, is still an Oriental mode of expression for indignities and disgrace falling on any one: "*The dust of my resentment shall fall upon your head*,"—and—"I will make you eat dust," are phrases used to this day in Turkey, Arabia, and Persia, to the same purpose. The prophetic intimation to the serpent, further meaning that mankind should some time obtain a much greater victory over the devil, than he should gain over them; not that they should literally bruise his head, or he their heel. Eve's being represented as first plucking the fruit (which some have gratuitously chosen to call *an apple*, and then believe it to have been actually so,) and giving it to Adam, may mean but to inform us that the woman being the weaker of the two, was the first assailed, and having sinned, persuaded Adam to disobey likewise. If any one part of the relation is held to be metaphorical, then must the whole be so. If we are to take the

\* Matt. xxiii. 33.  
John viii. 41—44.

† Matt. iii. 7.; xii. 34.

whole account literally, then we must *suppose* the serpent was once a much superior animal to what any of them now are, (as some critics do think,) and did not go on its belly; being in fact metamorphosed into its present shape from a very different one;—that it could speak,—was a rational creature, had even superior knowledge to man,—knew what God had said to him, and is now not only of another form, but capacity also; the original one having been unlike what we understand by any serpentine formed creature, yet still that this serpent was one of the beasts of the field, although the most subtile of them. We must believe all this in such a case, in opposition to other passages which plainly intimate that the Tempter was not an animal, but the evil Spirit. If it is said that the devil merely animated a serpent, and spoke from it, as the demons did in after-times from the bodies of those men called Demoniaes, then, a literal construction will not agree with the style used. It may be thought that Eve, in the days of her innocence, would not have been *afraid* of a real serpent speaking to her for the first time, nor if a lion had opened his mouth and spoken; which could have been brought about by supernatural power, as well as in the instance of Balaam's ass; but she must have been very much *surprised* if such creatures had done so who had never before showed similar powers, and in order to be able to *persuade* her to disobey God, she must have considered that they knew more than she herself did, and “*the serpent*” seemed to claim superior knowledge.

Those who have always taken the account of the temptation in a literal sense, overlooking all difficulties arising from doing so, will perhaps exclaim against such interpretations as are here given of it; but they will be inclined, it is presumed, to allow these more credence, on finding that in some material points they coincide with the opinion of so excellent a divine and Biblical critic as Dr. Alexander Gerard,\* whose remarks on the allusion to the serpent are highly in-

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\* Professor of Divinity in King's College, Old Aberdeen. See a Sermon by him, from the text, Gen. iii. 15.

teresting and instructive. "That it was the devil who tempted Eve, is acknowledged," he says, "by all. It is the general opinion,"—the Rev. Dr. goes on,—“either that he entered into one of the serpents of the field, actuated its body, gave it speech, and made it his instrument in the temptation; or else that he assumed the form of one of them, and appeared in its likeness. Had either of these been the case, Eve could scarcely have failed to be surprised and terrified; the serpents of the field were familiar to her: when she heard one of them speaking, and speaking rationally, she would immediately have run away, and knowing him only to be one of the brutes, she would not have easily allowed herself to be by him persuaded out of her obedience to God.

“Some are therefore of opinion, that the devil did not, on this occasion, either employ any of the brute serpents, or appear in the form of any of them. That he did, seems indeed to be implied in the words with which the history is introduced, *Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field.* But it seems to be implied in them only as they stand in our translation; the original may with equal propriety be rendered, *Now there was a serpent more subtile than any beast, or, than all the beasts of the field:*\* not one of the beasts of the field, but a being far more intelligent than any of them, than of them altogether, a being of a higher order, the devil.”—“But why does Moses call the devil a serpent, if he neither assumed the form of one, nor used one as his instrument? He might very properly call him a serpent, without any regard to his form, *on account of his subtlety.* It is common to express a rational being by the name of some animal to whose qualities his disposition bears a resemblance; there are instances of it in parts of Scripture not the most figurative;† the serpent has been considered in all ages as an emblem of malice and cunning; the Scripture insinuates this very reason for giving the name to the devil; he is that old serpent called the devil and Sa-

\* Dr. G. justifies this interpretation still further in a note.

† Matt. iii. 7.—xii. 34.—xxiii. 33.; Luke iii. 7.—xiii. 32.; Tim. iv. 17.

tan, which deceiveth the whole world.”\* In the same book he is also called a *dragon*; a mere fanciful animal, as we understand it; but we are doubtful of the nature of the creature referred to by this name in the original.† Dr. Gerard farther informs us, that in Scripture—“all the names of intellectual things and spiritual beings are figurative, being taken from those material and sensible things which bear an analogy to them.” When we read also of the *fiery serpents* which destroyed the Israelites, we are as much at a loss what to understand by them, for in the same place that the Hebrew word הנחשים *ha nechashim* (*serpents*) is used, the term השרפים *seraphim*‡ (*seraphs*) is coupled with it as applying to them. Moses is commanded on that occasion to make שרף *saraph*,§ and it is afterwards said that he made נחש *nachash*, (*a serpent*), as if they were intended to be convertible terms. Now, we understand an order of *angels* or *angelic beings*, by *seraphs*, and it is nowise improbable that what are called *fiery serpents* in the passage referred to, were powerful and supernatural agents of divine wrath, of a visible fiery appearance, or smiting with fire those they were sent against. Whatever was the actual form of the figure of brass made by Moses, it was an image which continued among the Jews for eight hundred years, and was worshipped by them until it was destroyed by Hezekiah.|| Our Saviour tells us that it was a type of himself,¶ and since it was so, it is more natural to believe it to have represented a *seraphic Being* than a serpent, which is typical of the foe of God and man. Painters have drawn the fiery serpents as reptiles with flames issuing from their mouths; while, to complete them according to their own fancies, some have added wings to them, in the same manner as in a picture of the temptation of Eve, Fuseli has put on the serpent the head of a young man, with wings. The reptile is there of the size of a Boa constrictor, smiling to fascinate, and twisting round the fatal tree! With the

\* Rev. xii. 9.

† Numb. xxi. 6.

|| 2 Kings xviii. 4.

† Chap. xx. 2.

§ Verse 8.

¶ John iii. 14.

same degree of attention to literal construction, such painters, if they intended to represent a scene in the land of Canaan, might characterise it, probably with equal truth, by a river of milk and another of honey, along with whatever else might in their ideas add to the effect. If the fiery serpents are to be considered literally, then we must suppose them to have had fire somewhere about them, or perhaps a luminous glow-worm sort of appearance; but very few will concur in this, if they consider well the scriptural style, and will rather fancy it to have been owing to their brilliant red colour, or the sense of heat arising from their bite, if they believe them to have been real serpents at all. From the term *saraph* being applied to them, Dr. Gerard supposes that in the temptation—"the devil probably appeared to Eve in the form of a seraph; she took him for an *angel of light*, conversed with him as such, and therefore listened to him without surprise, without suspicion, and was easily persuaded by him."—"This supposition," he adds, "agrees perfectly with the whole tenor of the history, and clears it from many difficulties in which other suppositions have involved it."

"If we consider the sentence as passed on the brute serpents, it is liable to endless difficulties, but if we consider it as respecting only the devil, it has great propriety and dignity. He appeared now, as he had appeared while tempting Eve, in the seraphic form. *Upon thy belly shalt thou go*; this is not meant against the brute serpents; it is not true of all of them, for flying serpents, it is said, continued to exist after this; \* of the other serpents, going on their bellies was essential from their construction. This figurative expression, at least one similar to it, is used elsewhere in Scripture, to signify a reduction to the lowest affliction: it is very deep affliction which the Psalmist intends to describe when he says, *Our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*† Its meaning is—Thou shalt be de-

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\* Their existence at any time is very doubtful, and the creatures called so, are believed to have been quite distinct from the serpent tribe.

† Ps xliv. 25.

graded from all thine original dignity and celestial glory, and reduced to an abject condition. *And dust shalt thou eat,* &c. signifying a state of bondage, captivity, and the lowest depression, such as Micah means when he says that *the nations shall lick the dust like a serpent.\** David prophesying of the Messiah, says, his enemies *shall lick the dust.†* Thus the devil was to be thenceforth in a state of the most abject depression, and overwhelmed with dreadful expectations.”‡

That the devil, in order to deceive Eve, actually transformed himself from an angel of darkness into the form of an angel of light, receives farther confirmation from a passage in St. Paul's 2d Epistle to the Corinthians :—“ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel ; *for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.*” §

It would appear that after the act had been committed, the devil remained in company with his victims, perhaps for the pleasure of hearing their doom pronounced by God, and from the expectation that they would be abandoned to his power ; but a greater punishment fell on himself. He continues, nevertheless, still to exercise a limited power here over man, when the latter yields to his temptations, but works in an unseen manner, going invisibly to and fro on the earth, and walking up and down on it, seeking whom he may destroy.||

Although it was sinful to do any thing they were commanded to abstain from, still, the first pair must have been in some way more to blame than the seemingly metaphorical account of Moses would imply. There must have been a deeper mystery attending *original sin* than we can now fathom, since it was visited with so great a punishment, both on the parties themselves and on their descendants ;—since their Creator himself became a man and suffered as a

\* Chap. vii. 17.

† Ps. lxxii. 9.

‡ Abridged from a Sermon by Dr. Gerard, from the text, Gen. iii. 15.

§ 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14.

|| Job i. 7. ; 1 Pet. v. 8.

mortal, in order that those who repented and believed on him might be saved from eternal punishment in a future state. The first man and woman do not appear to have been endowed with greater powers of resisting temptation than their posterity, many of whom we read of in Scripture as living for years in open disobedience both to divine and human laws, yet were forgiven on repentance, and the threatened retribution departed from,—all which would induce us to infer that the crime which involved the whole human race, was greatly more in reality than literally eating of a forbidden fruit, or assuming forbidden knowledge, very wrong although this must be allowed to have been.

From our first parents finding no necessity for clothing in their days of innocence, we may infer that in such a state none is required ; if in heaven we are to wear any, it will assuredly be of a different nature from the production of earthly looms ; and if so, then we can form but little conception of it ; but it is not probable that when we are again in a state of sinless purity and innocence, we shall wear what was not used in Eden until sin and shame first suggested and made it necessary. So associated in our ideas of propriety, however, has clothing since been, that when angelic beings appeared on earth in former times, they chose to seem in our eyes to have garments of a dazzling whiteness : we *may* afterwards wear such in heaven ourselves, but we may be assured that disembodied souls, at least, require none, although in metaphorical language they are said to receive white robes, from these being indicative of their having left all earthly contaminations. We read of being clothed with *light* as with a garment,—and with innocence, without attaching a literal meaning to these expressions.





## CHAPTER II.

Death, and the necessity there exists for *understanding and reflecting on its* consequences to the soul ;—with the unfounded and conflicting ideas which many persons entertain of these.

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“ As the light leaf, whose fall to ruin bears  
Some trifling insect's little world of cares,  
Descends in silence, while around waves on  
The mighty forest, reckless what is gone ;  
Such is man's doom, and ere an hour be flown,  
Reflect thou trifler, such may be thine own ! ”

HEMANS.

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UNLESS we believe that death puts an end for ever to our conscious existence, the most important business of our mortal lives is to consider as deeply as we can what may befall us after leaving this busy world ; and to prepare for our departure before we go hence, and be no more seen among men upon earth. What then, strictly speaking, is the change called DEATH, and what are its consequences ? Many will wonder at the ignorance that could prompt such questions, which *they* will be able to see no difficulty in answering ; but deeper inquirers, who think well before they attempt to decide, and have knowledge sufficient to be aware, in some degree, how much they have only imperfect ideas of, or know nothing concerning, will see that the first involves a conception of what, (physically speaking,) the life of the body depends on, or, in what it consists ; and that the second has been greatly disputed as to its immediate result, even among eminent divines.

Death has been likened to *a leap in the dark*, but it is much more so than it might be, if revelation was diligently studied ; for this sacred record enables us in a great measure to pierce what is usually called *the gloom of the grave*. One cause of our trembling when on the brink between life and death, is the uncertainty of the instant consequences to the soul. Although confiding in a resurrection and future immortality, some fear a temporary annihilation, as it were, which they suspect must precede it, to continue till the last trumpet shall call bodies again into existence ;—whereas, if they firmly believed that death will be no gloomy region to their souls, but one of life, light, happiness, and sociability, without an interval of oblivion and nothingness, the awful time of departure would be contemplated by the penitent believer with less dread when supposed at a distance, and met with more fortitude on its visible approach.

The *darkness* of death is probably all on *this side* of its portals ; that is, we are here in a great degree of mental obscurity, or uncertainty of its state ; but it need only be thus *in so far* ; not involved in the total ignorance which those feel who make no inquiries.

As our great duty here is to prepare for death, it cannot but be of assistance to us, to contemplate its first consequences to our rational faculties, and it must highly conduce to the earthly happiness of those who endeavour to do well, to believe their future rest and peace will commence, not at some long distant time, but whenever life shall quit their frail earthly frames.

And swift fly the hours of all mortal sojourning,

Till the order shall come that we life must resign ;

When our souls shall spring light from the house of their mourning

To the place of their rest—then why should we pine ?

Many strange ideas have been connected with the term *death*. In the East, it is thought to be under the superintendence of an invisible Being called the *angel* of death. Others have personified it into various mere fanciful shapes and figures. Death is more immediately occasioned by the

body's being deprived of what may be called a subtile essence, which seems to emanate from that great source of nervous energy the brain, and to pervade every part by means of the nerves, constituting *animal life*.

It has been already shown that when the Almighty said to Adam, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," this could only refer to his earthly *body*, for his soul was not made from the dust, and does not therefore sojourn in it for a time, or during death, as the body does, but was and is in its nature immortal : hence Solomon's observation,—“then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.”\* When mention was made of *the dead* being in *their graves*, only their *bodies* were meant ; death being spoken of as only killing and destroying ~~these~~, and thereby setting the soul free from the trammels of mortality, as shown in the words of the text just quoted, and in those of the ancient sage Baruch :—“for the dead that are in their graves, whose souls are taken from their bodies—”† *The death of man, therefore, merely signifies a separation of his soul and body, and the dissolution of the latter for a time (by the deprivation of animal life) while his soul continues to live.* A definition of mortality, to which I beg to call particular attention, and that it may be borne in mind throughout the ensuing discussions.

“If death,” says Sherlock, “be our putting off these bodies, then the resurrection from the dead is the re-union of soul and body ; the soul does not die, and therefore cannot be said to rise again from the dead ; but it is the body, which like seed falls into the earth, and springs up again more beautiful and glorious at the resurrection of the just.”‡ In this illustration, the vitality of the seed or embryo plant is not destroyed though its outward form decays. The germ of the seed, or life as it were of the plant, continues, and in due time reanimates its revived and changed body,—thus forming a very beautiful and appropriate simile or illustra-

\* Eccles. xii. 7.

† Chap. ii. 17.

‡ Practical Discourse on Death, chap. II. sect. 1.

tion of the death, committal to the earth, and resurrection of the body of man.

\* When we have learned to distinguish the organization from the principle of thought, the mere change of place of the particles of the organic frame, which is all that constitutes death relatively to the body, no longer seems to imply the dissolution of the principle of thought itself, which is essentially distinct from the organic frame, and by its very nature incapable of that species of change which the body exhibits; since it is very evident, that what is not composed of parts, cannot by any accident, be separated into parts.”\*

We are so framed, for wise reasons, that death is dreadful to our apprehensions, and therefore he has been called “the king of terrors,”—“our last enemy.” We connect with the hour of our departure hence the idea of extreme pain and agony, because perhaps it is unknown to us. But, whatever it be, the fear of merely suffering the agony of dissolution might be conquered by reason and reflection as we often see it conquered by high passion. It is the consequences of death that inspire the greatest terror. Whither does it conduct us? Of what nature are those new scenes into which the disembodied spirit is introduced? What shall be our fate in those unseen mansions, which we shall enter through the gate of dissolution? These are the subjects of doubt and anxiety, which chiefly arm death with terrors to our apprehension. What can effectually allay those terrors? Nothing but the assured hope of a better life, *to begin as soon as the life that now is, shall end.*

How few live as if they were to die. They are content to let that event come upon them as unexpectedly “as a thief in the night.” They grapple with their final foe, not merely unprepared, but absolutely incapacitated for the struggle, and then wonder and wail at their being overcome and “trodden under foot.” Where is the man who dares assert that on his death-bed he is certain to continue to believe, (if he ever really did so) that he shall sink into nothingness?

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\* Dr. Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of Mind, Lect. 97.

Who was he that in this awful situation seriously and calmly made such a declaration, and as if he actually gave it full credit? It is an idea, which on the brink of departure, scarce ever enters but into the wild ravings of delirium, and it is only in the hey-day of life and spirits, with death at an imagined distance, and hardly soberly thought of, that such an extravagant and improbable doctrine can have strength to maintain a belief or to prompt the infidel's song:—

“Death is but dreamless, endless sleep;  
Those who are wept, and those who weep,  
From the cold grave to which they go,  
Rise never more to joy or woe.”\*

Mr. Dick, in the introduction to his “*Philosophy of a future state*,” remarks that—“To treat a subject so interesting and momentous, with levity or indifference—to exert all the energies of the soul in the pursuit of objects, which a few years at most will snatch for ever from their embrace—and never to spend one serious hour in reflecting on what may possibly succeed the present scene of existence, or in endeavouring to find some light to clear up the doubts that may hang over this important inquiry, and to treat with derision and scorn, those who would direct them in this serious investigation—is not only foolish and preposterous, but the height of infatuation and madness.”

The life of man, on an average, is little more than thirty years, and as there are (according to the latest estimate) one thousand millions of human beings on the face of the earth, it will be found, by a very simple calculation, that at the rate of ninety-one thousand three hundred and twenty-four of our race die every day! Every hour that passes over our heads, about three thousand eight hundred immortal souls go out of this world, and a greater number come into it, to inhabit mortal bodies in their room, as the population of the earth is on the increase. A consideration which should show the ne-

\* De Rancè, a Poem, by the Rev. J. W. Cunningham.

cessity of preparation for yielding our places to others, and for joining the invisible flight of spirits which are continually leaving the earth ; for no one can tell, but that the next moment, his soul may be called on to become one of the number. Yet few apply the warnings which daily pass before them, to their own case ; forgetting that when the rich fool said—"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." "God said unto him—Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee"! There have been instances of circumstances apparently trivial in themselves, and nowise unknown before, that have caused the mind to consider with a new and deep attention the truths of death, and have in consequence led to a change of life in preparation for it. Guericus, a celebrated divine, hearing the fifth chapter of Genesis read, wherein are recounted the sons and descendants of Adam, in these terms :—"The whole life of Adam was nine hundred and thirty years, and he died ; the life of his son Seth was nine hundred and twelve years, and he died ;" and so on of the rest ; began to think with himself, that if such, and so great men, after so long a time, ended in death, it was not safe to lose more time in this world, but imperative on him to prepare for a future state to which he must soon inevitably remove.

Life flies away like a morning vapour,  
When it rises before the beams of day ;  
Life burns out like an evening taper, -  
That sinks and expires with the night away.

"With me," said Bonaparte, "immortality is the recollection left in the memory of men. That idea prompts to great actions. It would be better for a man never to have lived than not to leave behind him traces of his existence." Which declaration is as much as to say, that in as far as the person *himself* is concerned, death closes all consciousness for ever ; the soul, if there be one, perishes and dissolves, perhaps into air, as the body visibly does into dust ; or, that the matter of which the body is composed has a sentient or

thinking faculty impressed upon it, and acts in some incomprehensible way *of itself*.

“In returning from the field of Marengo to Paris, Bonaparte said exultingly to Bourrienne, ‘Well! a few more events like this campaign, and I may go down to posterity.’ ‘I think,’ replied the latter, ‘that you have done enough already to secure great and lasting fame.’—‘Yes,’ answered he, ‘I have done enough, it is true. In less than two years I have won Cairo, Paris, and Milan; but for all that, were I to die to-morrow, I should not at the end of ten centuries occupy half a page of general history.’ He was right. Many ages pass before the eye in the course of half an hour’s reading; and the duration of a reign, or of a life, is but the affair of a moment. In an historical summary, a page suffices to describe all the conquests of Alexander and Cæsar, and all the devastations of Timur and Gengis Khan.”\* How ineffably more sublime are the prospects which may be cherished of immortality, and in which *we ourselves* may act a part, than those of such fame as that contemplated by Bonaparte, in which *we* have no farther connexion beyond a remembrance at times by those upon earth, whom (after a few years elapse) we never knew, and who were not even in existence in our days. What are the most splendid actions, the greatest conquests, or works of earthly magnificence to the glory we might look forward to share in a future life! Well might Lord Byron say of a conqueror’s fame arising from his victories:—

“What is the end of fame? ’tis but to fill  
A certain portion of uncertain paper.”

Although all should feel a wish to leave a good name behind them, yet it should principally be in reference to their own immortal welfare and happiness.

“I am of opinion,” says Addison, “that so useful and elevated a contemplation as that of the soul’s immortality, cannot be resumed too often. There is not a more improving

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\* Bourrienne’s Memoirs of Napoleon.



exercise of the human mind, than to be frequently reviewing its own great privileges and endowments. There is not a more effectual means to awaken in us an ambition raised above low objects and little pursuits, than to value ourselves as heirs of eternity."\*

I have often been astonished that seemingly so little thought should be given by many Christians to the probable state of the disembodied soul after death, or immediately on its leaving the body. Most people, indeed, make no search into this question at all, from the erroneous idea that nothing can be discovered regarding it beyond some very general truths; while others contend that every inquiry into the condition of the soul in its separate or disembodied state, must be at least too deep and difficult for them, and therefore sit down contented in their ignorance, instead of endeavouring to ascertain whether this supposition be correct or not.

A similar complaint of this indifference is made by "a Country Pastor," in his "*Lectures on the Scripture Revelations concerning a future state.*"†—"It is remarkable," he says, "that interesting as the subject must needs be to all, and frequently as it must happen, that some degree of vague and indistinct thoughts respecting it flit through the mind of most Christians, yet there are very many whose notions concerning a future state will be found not only groundless, but even inconsistent with themselves to such a degree, as to give proof that they can never have (properly speaking) reflected or inquired on the subject. I am not speaking of such as (for reasons easy to be guessed) do not like to think about the next life; but of those who profess to derive comfort from the thought, and yet whose ideas are so confused and contradictory, that it is plain how little they can have suffered their minds to dwell on it."—"And many persons again are perplexed as to the interpretation of certain passages of Scripture, or with the conclusions which science

\* Spectator, No. 210.

† Lecture I. p. 28. London, 1830

has established: when all the while, those notions are in fact no part of the *Scripture* doctrine of a future state, but have been founded merely on the bold assertions of uninspired men."

Although the generality of mankind seldom or ever endeavour to know the immediate state which death is to open to their souls, yet there are many others who have directed their studies to this inquiry, as the references in this work will amply prove; but, differing as they do, it is far from an easy task, particularly for a *layman*, to ascertain what is best founded,—yet I seek on this account no leniency in theological criticism, in excuse for error, and I will show none while endeavouring farther to establish what many pious men conceive to be the truth revealed relative to this point. Were I bringing forward only my own opinions or interpretations of Holy Writ, I might well hesitate and feel diffident of their reception, but I have little *new* to offer on any of the great questions discussed, and all the merit I can claim is that of impartial research, and giving a fair consideration to the arguments on both sides; testing every important doctrine involved in the subject, by its power of confuting all others opposed to it. Several of the works quoted are scarce and little known, while few but clerical readers are much acquainted with many of those mentioned in these pages. I refer to no writings as *conclusive authority*, save to those which Christians acknowledge to have been divinely inspired; but it is also necessary to inquire into and illustrate popular opinions, and those by men whose sentiments are justly valued, which can only, in many cases, be learned by having recourse to very miscellaneous literature. I have adopted no opinion without the most mature consideration of the arguments urged in support of all the views which have been taken on any point considered: I should therefore hope, these opinions will not be treated lightly at first by those who have previously thought little on the subject, although they may appear at variance with preconceived ideas. It has been well remarked, that Solomon has expressed, in a very striking manner, the leading features of the man who

takes up opinions with little examination, and then adheres to them with inaccessible pertinacity ; and him who forms them only after full and candid examination, and with a clear conception of the grounds on which they are formed ;—“ *the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*”

Very different opinions prevail on the immediate consequences of death to the soul : whether it passes into a lethargic state, not to awaken until the resurrection, or retains its present powers of thought and mental feeling *in the interval*. Some, while speaking of the effects of death, allude merely to those *on the body*, while others mean to refer to the spirit which in life ruled its actions. Some think the body should be considered as the deceased man ; others, the separated soul. Hence arise indefinite modes of expression regarding the dead or departed, leading to much confusion, and even direct contradiction ; the state of our deceased friends being at one time spoken of as one of light, life, happiness, and re-union with others who have gone before them ; while at another time, it is viewed as dark, lifeless, cold, and lonely, with only the prospect of a future meeting. Death sinks the body in the earth or in the waters, or dissipates it into air, as mere inanimate matter ; and man as a complete creature, or, in other words, as man, ceases to live ; but we have the strongest cause for believing that to the soul, death only removes a veil, as it were, which in mortal life interposes between it and the unseen world with impenetrable closeness ;\*—that death vastly enlarges the prospects of the soul, and shows it a much more glorious scene which our mortal eyes cannot represent to the mind while it remains in the body. The consideration of all this should make us less unwilling to have the film removed which hinders our mental sight from beholding what may be to many a most happy prospect.

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\* Although the prospect behind the veil be hidden from our senses during life, yet revelation may enable us to know in some measure what there now lies hid.

How happy the soul may be in its separate state, still it has this mark of God's displeasure on it, that it has not its body. As long as it continues thus disjoined, death may be said to retain its power over the man. When our mortal bodies are the instruments of so many pleasures, we cannot doubt but that the union of a glorified body to the soul at the resurrection, shall greatly conduce to the happiness of our spirits, and be of great use to them. They must receive mutual impressions from each other ; and, as on earth there exists such a sympathy between them, so in heaven their reunion must lead to an increase of the delight experienced by the soul, though in a way now in a great measure unknown to us.

"If the soul," observes an old author, "remains after the dissolution of the body ; if, after it is delivered from it, it enjoys a separate life and vigour ; then we have many questions to ask, and many inquiries to make relating to the soul thus separated and thus existing. What sort of life it enjoys ? What sort of state ?" "It will be a pleasing curiosity to pursue the fate and the fortune of the immortal soul from its departure and deliverance from its earthly body even to the consummation of all things."\*

We all know what becomes of the body, but the soul being invisible even in life here, we cannot trace its retreat by our bodily organs, and yet it must be *somewhere* ; retaining its individuality, else it would cease to exist, and be no more the soul or spirit of a man.

"When coldness wraps this suffering clay,

*Ah whither flies th' immortal mind ?*

It cannot die, it cannot stay,

But leaves its darken'd dust behind."†

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\* Thomas Burnet, D.D. "*De statu mortuorum*," (translated in the text.)

† Byron's Hebrew Melodies. In a letter to Mr. Dallas, Lord Byron tells him that he believes death to be "an eternal sleep, at least of the body." So in plain prose, this noble author doubted very much that there is any future state of individual and conscious existence.

The Emperor Sardanapalus wrote his own epitaph : “ *Eat, drink, and be merry, for the rest is nothing,* ” an epitaph, says Aristotle, fit for a hog ; and it cannot be doubted that this monarch was one of those who considered the grave to be the place of *eternal rest* for both body and soul.

The French revolutionists of 1790 termed their burial grounds “ *Fields of repose,* ” which was ordered to be inscribed on the entrances in conspicuous characters, with the understanding, that *there*, body and soul (if there was, or had been a soul) both lay equally dead and for ever ; the visible remains of no farther use than to make saltpetre as an ingredient in gunpowder, in order the sooner to add the living to the dead. After they had satisfied themselves that death is an everlasting sleep, the discovery was deemed of such importance, that it was published by the National Assembly, as a notable fact which might be depended on ; but this doctrine was not found productive of such immensely beneficial consequences to society as were expected, and therefore it was soon rejected, and a law passed, by which it was enacted and declared, that *death is not* an eternal sleep.

On the entrance to the family vault of the Duke of Richmond, in the chapel of Goodwood, is placed the inscription, “ *Ultima Domus,* ” the last house ; which gave rise to the ensuing sarcastic impromptu :—

“ Did he who edified this wall,  
Not read, or not believe, St. Paul ;  
Who says there is, where'er it stands,  
‘ *Another house* not made with hands ;’—  
Or may we gather from these words,  
*That house* is not a house of Lords ! ”

It is not so much my design to prove the future immortality of man, and that he shall again exist in a conscious state of being *beyond the grave*, (by which phrase I understand, *after the resurrection*) as to show that the grave is merely the temporary receptacle of the mortal part alone of man, or of all that is properly (in our common sense of the word) *material* of him ; while the soul, which is so formed as to be able to exist in a conscious state without it, lives on in some

other place in its separate condition until the last day, in opposition to the notion, that the consciousness of the soul depends on the life of the body, both dying together, and to revive at the same time at the resurrection, giving rise to the melancholy belief, that we shall have no conscious meeting with our departed friends until then, or as a poet expresses it :—

“ But *one* shall be the meeting yet, and *one* the meeting day,  
When the trump of God shall tell the dead that time has passed away.”

One great hope and comfort which supports many under the trials they meet with from the loss of friends by death, is that those loved ones, though dead in body, are alive in spirit, and continue to think of us, as the soul of the rich man mentioned by our Saviour did of his five brethren who remained alive upon earth ; but instead of being miserable like it, we should hope that those of our Christian friends are resting from their earthly labours in the happier mansions of *Hades*, that invisible region where revelation informs us, souls dwell in their separate or disembodied state, all in custody or safe keeping until their re-union with bodies.

A thousand examples might be given, where, both in prose and verse, the condition of the departed is held to be dark and dismal, as if all that had once loved or felt friendship, joy, or sorrow in them lay in the grave, cut off from all social intercourse, in oblivion of the past, insensible of the present, and to continue so till the last trumpet shall awaken them from the silence and loneliness of the tomb. It is of the greatest consequence to consider *the truth—the reality* of such representations, and under the various ideas they would lead us to adopt.

The *soul* is often in Scripture put for the whole man, and therefore, instead of saying that dead men are in their graves, we ought rather to say they are in the region of spirits. Now, who that reads and believes in such lines as these from Young’s “*Night Thoughts*,” can have any other idea than that of lying insensible in the earth for a while :—

————— “ the grave, that home of man,  
Where dwells the multitude.”

Or those in Gray's celebrated "*Elegy in a country church-yard*:"—

"Beneath those ruggid elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell forgotten laid,  
*The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.*"

In the grave lie the remains of what enabled man, or the soul of man, to communicate with his fellow-men upon earth, —with the external world, and although the soul loses this means at death, it does not follow that it loses its consciousness also, and that it can neither see, hear, nor speak in the unseen spiritual world. The grave is neither *the home* nor *the resting-place* of man after death. The earth is the scene of his labours and pilgrimage when he is alive as a man; and when he dies, that is, when his mortal clothing falls inanimate and useless, like a worn out vestment, *Hades*, (as the *Scripture* denominates the middle state) is the place of his rest, or temporary residence until the resurrection; and either heaven or hell shall be his everlasting home, according to his doom at the day of account, until which time, his *eternal* state cannot be said to commence.

In Blair's poem of "*the Grave*," the author, in describing a deathbed scene, thus very properly speaks of the soul of man as *the man* :—

————— "Oh! how he longs  
To have *his* passport sign'd, and he dismiss'd!  
'Tis done, and now *he's* happy!—The glad soul  
Has not a wish uncrown'd."

But the conclusion is in a very different strain of thought.

"*'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,  
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.*"

That is, *we* lie insensibly and in darkness until the resurrection, according to the concluding simile :—

"Thus at the shut of ev'n, the weary bird  
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake  
Cov'rs down and dozes till the dawn of day,  
Then claps his well fledg'd wings, and bears away"!.

The Rev. Mr. Evans compares "the inertness of the grave with our present vivid feelings," and speaks of our re-assembling in a future state only after our rising from the tomb to an eternal re-union.\* But as it is our souls *alone* that now are capable of those feelings, they cannot be said to have any thing to do with the inertness of the grave, beyond leaving their earthly garments there for a time.

In an unpublished Sermon now before me, which was preached in presence of a Presbyterian Synod, it is said to be—"a gloomy prospect to be lowered down to the bottom of the grave, there to see corruption. It is gladdening to anticipate the joyful time, when the grave shall yield up its ancient charge."—We should anticipate no such gloomy descent. It is indeed a dreadful thing, (both in anticipation and in reality) the separation between soul and body caused by death, but the moment it takes place, the soul must care very little what becomes of its late body in the mean time; knowing that the power of God is able to give it an immortal body at the appointed day. What signifies it, whether the dead body be corrupted above or below ground—be burned, or otherwise destroyed. Those of many of the martyred saints and early Christians underwent the most degrading treatment, whilst their souls were either on their way to paradise, or enjoying its happy repose, glad to have escaped from pain and a life of trial. The time of the resurrection shall, without doubt, be a joyful moment to the just, but it is not the time in our future existence which we ought to look forward to in the first place.

Mr. Montgomery wrote a comparison between the state of things "*thirty years ago*," with what was at the period of his writing; and among the rest of the changes which time had produced, notices, that—"Thirty years ago, Mr. Pitt was in the zenith of power, and Mr. Fox in the nadir of opposition; balancing between them our political sphere, amidst those disturbing forces of tremendous energy, which

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\* Rectory of Valehead, p. 91.



then were shaking the whole system of civilized society around. They are now *sleeping side by side* under their marble tombs in Westminster Abbey."

When we read such expressions, we are led into the belief that the very thoughts of the dead have literally perished; that they are at present plunged into oblivion;—or, is the dust of which the mortal house or clothing of the soul is made, to be considered as the man himself, the intelligent being? Is the soul, after its separation, to be overlooked, as if it then were nothing to us, or continued no part of man? or does it also sink unconscious into the earth? Can it truly be said that these two departed great men are now lying *insensible in the dust*? No,—*they*, that is, their immortal *spirits*, are in the mansion of departed souls, perhaps comparing together their earthly turmoilings (if they are not now tired of such an insignificant theme) to contests between two emmets about the placing of straws, and lamenting having spent so much of their allotted days of probation engrossed in mere worldly pursuits, of the evanescent importance of which they must be deeply sensible. What avails them now—the anxiety, with which they engaged in every foreign quarrel, in order to keep a shadow within certain ideal limits, under the plea of preserving *the balance of power*, the scales of which they now see were turned by an unseen Power, over which they had no control; yet spent millions on the thankless continental despots, who they vainly thought, would confine it within due bounds. Are they now reaping the benefit of their continual exertions in the sea of political storms? Or, do they plume themselves on the once fancied skill with which they steered the vessel of the state? Has the pilot (who was said to have weathered the storm, which he himself unwittingly contributed to raise) laid his disembodied spirit into a haven of rest by the exertions which on earth have immortalized his name? They dread no longer "*Liberty and equality*," and their great enemy, the once terrible Napoleon, is less to be feared than a child! He shall never again hear the shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" or the cries of battle; and the beggar who sat at his palace gate is preferred before him.

He has not, however, yet forgotten all this, but can even now ruminate on the past, the present, and the future, else Scripture plainly deceives us. The millions who fell in his wars, fear not now the charge of his imperial guard, and the shades of his soldiers would feel no enthusiasm at the sight of their eagles which they followed so often to victory, although they might still view them with a sigh on the remembrance of times which to them can never return :—their ghosts are too distant to observe objects upon earth, for they hover not around the green hillocks on the fields of their earthly warfare : they have fled to other scenes, where they still have the power to talk of their deeds, but there they will rush into battle no more. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Let us hope, however, that our two illustrious countrymen had their more serious hours,\* when as mortals they offered up their prayers to the Most High for pardon of their sins, and that of these petitions they now feel the benefit, cherishing hopes that at the day of judgment they shall be included among the redeemed of God through the merits of Him who died to save those sinners who are sensible and repentant of their errors before passing from this life. Far other topics now engage their attention, than what once occupied them,—they anticipate the day, however distant it may yet be, when the Judge of all the earth shall come in his heavenly majesty and power, to bid his archangels summon bodies again into existence for the habitations of immortal souls, and thereafter to decide himself on the eternal fate of all the quick *and the dead*, who shall then be rewarded according to their deeds and repentance through faith.

When we think on the events of the last thirty years—on the labours which now avail not—on the hopes of the future which have ended in disappointment—let us be wise, and up and doing what shall most assuredly be of use in another and a lasting world. What is fame and glory upon earth to us when touched by the finger of death ? What has now been

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\* The St. Helena memoirs would seem to preclude so charitable a hope with regard to the French Emperor.

the result to each illustrious statesman who once used to shine in the senate-house—to each gallant warrior, who exerted himself to the utmost to win a character for bravery? Fallen, alas ! are the bravest of the brave, and gone to where other ideas will occupy their minds ;—or, still alive on earth, they suffer from the effects of their sanguinary campaigns, sadly comparing the result with their expectations ; while, in most instances, none beyond themselves and their nearest relations or friends recollect a single deed of their individual valour. Even the lustre of every other great and hard fought battle of modern times is now thrown into the shade with us by the glories of *Trafalgar* and *Waterloo* ! A far-famed warrior, who, in the hour of victory, died a *glorious* death, (often as painful as any other one) thanked God, in his last moments, that he had done *his duty* ; but he evidently referred not to a duty too often forgotten,—a Christian duty to God and to our fellow-men,—which alone we shall have to account for at the great tribunal. Instead of this, some appear only to consider their duty to consist in serving their country, (which, no doubt, if properly performed, shall have its reward, and deservedly so) but there is no court of Fame in the next world, to distinguish mere heroic deeds against our *lawful* enemies—no medals will be distributed there to such as bravely joined in the carnage of their foes, —perfectly indifferent, at the same time, to leaving the world totally unprepared, and at an instant's warning ! He who has religiously done right to the utmost of his ability, and humbly trusts his errors shall be forgiven, is the man who shall at last be the triumphant conqueror ; but far be it from me to mean that bravery and virtue may not be combined. Both ought to be kept in view, as the surest armour for victory. Few, indeed, can, when dying, declare their confidence that they have done that duty which shall avail them in the day of account ; so the best should depart with the prayer—“ God be merciful to me a sinner” !

When our children are at one time told that the dead are sleeping in the grave, and at another time that they are in heaven and happy, what can they rationally conclude ? Some

will tell them that their souls or spirits shall go immediately to reject those departed friends who loved them, and in a bright and beautiful place above the clouds ;—others assure them their souls shall sleep till the last day, but that this is of no consequence, as they shall not be sensible of the interval. A true understanding on this point would tend in no slight degree to establish the religious ideas of the young on a sure foundation, and also be essentially useful to many farther advanced.

A child telling his mother what a poor old man had said to him, says :—

“He spoke of the grave as a place of rest,  
Where the weary sleep in peace and are blest ;  
And he told how his kindred there were laid,  
And the friends with whom in his youth he play’d.”

The mother explains that the man did not mean the grave, but another place totally different :—

“There’s a land of which you have heard me speak,  
Where age never wrinkles the dweller’s cheek ;  
But in joy they *live*, fair boy, like thee—  
*It was there that the old man long’d to be !*”\*

It must have appeared very strange to the boy that the man should in reality allude to a place so very opposite in every respect to the one he named. One of the verses of an ode to the memory of a young lady runs thus :—

“Vanish’d are now thy flattering dreams of bliss ;  
Alike insensible to joy or pain,  
A wakeless sleep thou sleep’st—  
Thy bed—the cold, damp grave !”

In a description of the effects of the plague in a ship at sea, when all died but one, the survivor exclaims—“Rest—rest brave companions ! until a voice shall sound stronger than your deep slumber—until the sea give up its dead, and you rise to meet your Judge.”† Which seems to say that the place of their rest is at the bottom of the ocean.

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\* Poetical Ephemeras, by James P. Brown, 1831.

† Monthly Mag. Feb. 1831.

An inscription on a monumental tablet in the English burying-ground at Bourdeaux, thus speaks of the death sleep of the soul :—

“There was a sweet and nameless grace  
That wandered o’er her lovely face ;  
And from her pensive eyes of blue,  
Was magic when they sparkling grew.  
Her hair of glancing auburn shade  
In rich luxuriance curling stray’d ;  
And when she spoke, or when she sung,  
Enchantment on her accents hung.  
*Where is she now ?—Where all shall be,  
Sunk in the grave’s obscurity ;  
Yet never, never slumber’d there  
A mind more pure, a form more fair !*”

Some verses entitled “*The forsaken hearth,*” conclude thus, with a similar idea :—

“They may all return—but the light will be dead  
In the cottage hearth which their father fed ;  
*A dark green mound where no mourner weeps,  
Will tell where his broken spirit sleeps,  
In death’s sad silent abode.” \**

Thousands read such intimations of the state of departed souls, without noticing the false views they give, or their evil tendency, and both their authors and many of their readers, will be equally surprised to be told there is any thing of the kind in them with which fault can be found.

The following lines are from stanzas supposed to have been written in a Cathedral :—

“A thousand phantoms seem to rise  
Beneath my lightest tread,  
And echoes bring me back replies  
From homes that hold the dead.

“The loftiest passions and the least,  
Lie sleeping, side by side,  
But love hath reared its staff of rest  
Beside the grave of pride.” †

\* Poetical Ephemeris.

† Friendship’s Offering for 1832.

The warrior and the poet, with a number of others, are represented as lying in the graves around, while death's memorials are above "each slumbering head;" and all are spoken of as if their souls had been entombed with their bodies. When we look upon the sepulchres where the mortal remains of the dead have mixed with the earth, we too often feel as if *they*—the departed—were also there; but we ought to reflect that *they are not*. They have, indeed, left behind them the frames which their souls were once wont to use, in order to speak to us and to look upon us, but souls without such aid can speak and see and feel in the spiritual world:—they never required the body to think, or assist them to remember, or to resolve;—they have left for a while these frail instruments behind them—these external senses which were necessary to enable them to act their part in this sublunary scene;—but they themselves—the spirits with whom we were wont to hold converse are still in conscious being in a far different world; so we ought not to mourn over (as it were) their worn-out clothing—their decayed dwellings, (much as we may have loved these when they were animated with life,) but direct our thoughts to where the wearers—the inhabitants have gone.

A verse from Wordsworth furnishes another example:—

"She lived unknown, and few could know  
When Lucy ceased to be;  
But *she is in her grave*—and oh!  
The difference to me!"

This has been called "touchingly beautiful," and it may be so; but he who lamented for the dead must have derived more comfort, if instead of looking down at the dark grave, he had raised the eye of his imagination to paradise, where the lady's spirit, it is to be hoped, resided: so she could not be said to have altogether ceased *to be*, when every mental faculty remained in a state of conscious existence. In lamenting for the dead, however, it is too common to carry our imaginations no farther than their graves, and the rest enjoyed by them is indiscriminately spoken of as there or in

heaven, whereas in fact it can be in *neither*. In a pathetic and much-admired old Scottish ballad, a lover exclaims—

“ I wish I were where Helen lies,  
Where night and day on me she cries;  
I wish I were where Helen lies,  
On fair Kirkconnel lee.”

He considers the grave as the place of rest, and seems to have no thought beyond an insensible sleep there by the side of his mistress, at least till the resurrection. The dead themselves have been figured thus speaking to the living, which might be allowable enough in poetic licence, if they could properly be said to be in the earth, but it is too great a violence of possibility, even in fable, to suppose a departed ghost to speak from where it *cannot* be, or to imagine that dust is endowed with such a power :—

“ Come to my narrow bed !—  
Life has no rest so sweet ;  
With me thou can’st not dread  
The sod at head and feet ;  
Where spring’s sweet flowers are bred—  
Come to my narrow bed !

“ Come to my narrow bed !—  
There holy peace is given ;” \*—

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The following verses will be found to convey a more scriptural doctrine than those preceding them :—

A dream of the night when deep slumber was o’er me,  
Enlighten’d my spirit lost peace to restore me,  
And a vision of brightness, of life, and of gladness,  
Bade me banish the gloom which occasioned my sadness.

The form of one dead stood before me, disclosing  
That souls may in peace and in rest be reposing,  
Regretting not leaving earth’s dwelling of sorrow,  
When joy is succeeded by wail on the morrow.

Regard not my grave, it said, as where I'm lying,  
And think not I dwell there, nor bend o'er it sighing;  
In paradise\* there is no dying nor weeping,  
And we smile that ye think we're insensibly sleeping.

Then lament not I vanish'd so sudden away,  
For life at the longest now to us seems a day;—  
We're free from its troubles, but wait for the judgment,  
And the rising of bodies again for our lodgement.

But resign'd to the will of th' Almighty Disposer,  
All on earth should remain till probation be over:—  
At thy death we may meet in the bowers I reside in,  
And hope for still better in heaven to abide in.

In the classic days of Greece and Rome several of their *literati* (as Lucian) wrote "*Dialogues of the dead*," and many of our modern authors have followed their example. Mrs. Rowe's "*Letters from the Dead to the Living*" was long a popular book. In all these, *separate souls only* are referred to—it is they who are said to meet and speak to each other; and the locality is invariably laid in the region of disembodied spirits, but the fancied situation of this place is variously described. The ancients always meant by it, either the Elysian fields or Tartarus,—never the grave. An old English author consoling one for a loss he had sustained by death, puts the case to him—"Suppose thy friend should come to thee, and say, my good friend why dost thou afflict thy soul. I am gone to the Paradise of God, a sight most beautiful to behold.—I would not live if I might again.—Bid thy friends that they mourn not for thee when thou diest, unless they would wish thee to be miserable again."†

In opposition to the gloomy ideas which we must feel of the state of those who are gone, by associating them in our thoughts solely with the grave, it will be found much more truly represented by the poet Rogers, in the following beautiful lines, which consider *the soul* as the man, when the body is returned to dust:—

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\* Scripture always distinguishes between Paradise or Abraham's bosom and the highest heaven, but they are now generally confounded together.

† Grief Disarmed, &c. 1682.—Reprinted in 1830.



"When by a good man's grave I muse alone,  
 Methinks an angel sits upon the stone,  
 Like those of old, on that thrice hallowed night,  
 Who sate and watch'd in raiment heavenly bright,  
 And, with a voice inspiring joy, not fear,  
 Says, pointing upwards, *that he is not here,*  
*That he is risen.*"

That the immortal bodies which our souls are afterwards to be clothed with, shall spring from those now lying in the grave, or which have lived and are now dead, there can be no question; for revelation distinctly informs us of this as a fact. The expression of our Lord, when he said that what lay in the grave should hear his voice and come forth at the last day, does not imply that the *soul* or conscious principle of man lies there too, for this would be at direct variance with many other passages in the Scriptures, particularly in the New Testament. That part of man which is dead and senseless, shall rise from the dead—from wherever it is, but that which remains alive after the death of the other, shall merely return to receive its everlasting clothing or person. It shall come from that middle state where the spirits of the departed now rest, and having been joined to a body, shall then go to the region of reward or punishment, whither the judgment can alone consign them; and, if there is any other lay of account than that, when the Judge shall appear to the earth at his second coming, Holy Writ, at least, cannot be cited to establish it. Tombstones may tell us—"Here lies"—such a one, "in hopes of a blessed resurrection," but we might well exclaim with the poet—

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"False marble—no!  
 Nothing but clay can lie in death below.  
 And *it* ne'er felt hope, nor knew a thought,  
 But that which *could*, a distant place has sought:  
 And hopes or fears as memory whispers *there*;  
 Waiting till bodies leave their earthly lair.  
 The soul immortal and unchanging must  
 Be call'd *the Being*, not its buried dust:  
 Both shall stand before the judgment throne,  
 And neither be condemned nor saved *alone*.  
 So the dread sentence has not yet been given,  
 Which dooms all human kind to hell or heaven."

In Sir Walter Scott's "*Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*," while commenting on the story of the Witch of Endor, he speaks at one time of a departed soul coming from *the grave*, and at another time *from heaven*, where the soul of the prophet had been in happiness. At page 165, when mentioning a deceased person, he talks of his enjoying *the natural repose of the tomb*, and a few pages farther on of another "*as a saint in heaven*." If the dead body is to be considered as the deceased man, or the soul to be spoken of in that light, one author ought at least to adhere to one mode of expression, in order to be consistent and understood; the question undoubtedly ought to be—what is the condition of the *conscious principle* or immortal *part of man* after his mortal life is over? Where *it is*, *there*, may be said, *he* is; what it experiences, such, it may be also said, *he* does. His body changes and is completely renewed several times during his life, but he is still called the same man, because his soul continues *the same* from childhood to old age, although its powers vary from different causes. According to certain mysterious changes in the body, the soul which inhabits it, and is most intimately connected with it (during its life) may be influenced by these changes, and allowed to develop its powers more at one time than another,\* but this does not prove that the body itself thinks or wills, which shall in the following chapter be more particularly shown.

In the work last referred to, Sir Walter imagines that it is not improbable the spirits of the dead roam about the earth, acquainted with every thing that passes; so it does not appear that this author has any definite or uniform belief whither souls first go. The passage now alluded to, is as follows:—"The object of this letter is to show, from what attributes of our nature, whether mental or corporeal, arises that predisposition to believe in supernatural occurrences. It is, I think, conclusive, that mankind, from a very early period, have their minds prepared for such events by the con-

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Even Christ as a man did not receive his wisdom, while on earth, all at once, but gradually acquired it as he grew in stature. See St. Luke i. 80.—  
ii. 52.

sciousness of the existence of a spiritual world, inferring in the general proposition the undeniable truth, that *each man* from the monarch to the beggar, who has once acted his part upon the stage, *continues to exist*, and may again even in a disembodied state, if such is the pleasure of Heaven, for aught that we know to the contrary, *be permitted to mingle amongst those who yet remain in the body*," p. 47. It is not our business here to inquire what the God of heaven *might be able* to bring about, but what is decreed by Him as the fate of the disembodied spirit. What, in short, *naturally* happens to us immediately after death. It will here be observed, that this great writer, in speaking of deceased men, distinctly alludes *to their souls alone*, the propriety of which mode of expression and of thinking of our late friends, it is a prominent object with me to impress upon my readers.

In his "*Legend of Montrose*," Sir Walter puts these words into the mouth of a highland seer—"be my visions from heaven or hell, or from the middle sphere of disembodied spirits."\*—Now, although this does not prove the author's own belief on the point, or that there is such a place, yet it shows he was well aware of the doctrine relative to it, and, therefore, that he ought not in other passages to have spoken as if there could be no doubt spirits were either in *heaven or hell*, or in *the grave*, and then that it was possible they were still *on the earth*, and lastly, that there is *the middle sphere* as a *fifth* place for them.

In the following verses, the body is at one time spoken of as if it were the Being which had acted a part in this world for a while, and its fate, or state as that of the departed, while the soul at another time is considered also as the Being whom we knew on earth.

#### TO A DYING INFANT.

"Sleep, little baby! sleep!  
 Not in thy cradle bed,  
 Not on thy mother's breast  
 Henceforth shalt thou rest,  
 But with the quiet dead.

“ Yes—with the quiet dead,  
    Baby, thy rest shall be,  
    Oh ! many a weary wight,  
    Weary of life and light,  
    Would fain lie down with thee.

“ Flee, little tender nursling !  
    Flee to *thy grassy nest* ;  
    There the first flowers shall blow,  
    The first pure flake of snow  
    Shall fall upon thy breast.

“ I have laid down my darling  
    Deep in the damp cold earth—  
    His empty bed I see,  
    His silent nursery,  
    Once gladsome with his mirth.

\* \* \* \*

“ Now (like a dew-drop shrin'd  
    Within a crystal stone)  
    Thou'rt safe in heaven, my dove !  
    Safe with the Source of Love,  
    The Everlasting One.

“ And when the hour arrives,  
    From flesh that sets me free,  
    Thy spirit may await  
    The first at heaven's gate,  
    To meet and welcome me ! ”

There seems here an evident inconsistency. Body and soul when united may be called *one Being* ; but the first, even then forming but the clothing of the other, should not when separated be distinguished, the same as the infant who once used it as the dwelling of his soul. To say that the departed go to sleep in the grave, and are also in heaven awake to happiness or woe, at one and the same time, is surely a contradiction in terms ; and yet this is plainly the import of such a mode of speaking, and very different from saying that the body lies in the grave insensible, while the soul feels delight in paradise. The body receives and conveys certain sensations to the soul, but it cannot be too often or too strongly

impressed upon us, that it is the latter which is pre-eminently *the Being* when a disunion has taken place.

I shall conclude this chapter with the consideration of one other example of, and some further remarks on a style of writing which assuredly exhibits the state of death in a mistaken and highly improper point of view; a view, indeed, which, meeting with it so often in the works of many of the most learned and zealous Christians, was the cause which first led me to seriously ponder if death could really be the state they represented. My reason and my feelings revolted from the idea; but yet when *the sleep of the soul* was so upheld by eminent men,—quoting from the Scriptures, too, as undoubted authority for their theory,—when some physiologists also adopted it on other grounds, and reasoned so strongly from the physical nature of man, insisting that the brain and the soul are in life so intimately connected that they must live and die together, instancing many well-known facts in support of this,—what can the moderately learned infer from all such reasonings, but that their departed friends are in a state at present of utter unconsciousness, and that until the resurrection they shall continue thus. That *their bodies* are so, no man could doubt for a moment, the only uncertainty is with regard to *their souls*. The complete unconsciousness of the soul after death is by no means an error of those whose studies never led them to inquire into the subject: it has been fallen into by some whose duty it is to teach others a true knowledge of the Scriptures. It has, (as I have already observed) been entertained by some of the highest dignitaries of the church as well as many of their less eminent brethren, but also distinguished for their learning and piety. We should therefore investigate this question as deeply as we can, and impartially compare those scriptural passages on which the reasoners of both sides found their respective doctrines.

The following quotation is from the work of a Christian teacher whose style and frequent reference to Dr. Law's

“*Theory of Religion*” would lead us to infer that he favours the doctrine held by that prelate, of the sleep of the soul:—

—“and when the vain questioner, and the devout believer shall have been for ages *sleeping together in the dust*, He, who is for ever the same, and whose years fail not, shall still in certainty and silence work on. For though to the feeble and short-lived race of man, that which is to be, only after *they* have long descended into the silence of the grave, may seem to possess but a faint and feeble interest, though we may vainly desire that all the complicated changes of an universe, shall be effected in the space of an ephemeral existence, shut in by yesterday and to-morrow,—though we think with indifference of the day when the Saviour’s name shall be owned throughout the universe, and the choral voice of his redeemed shall send forth an hallelujah of joy and thanksgiving,\* *because the shout of ecstasy cannot pierce through the silence of the tomb, nor sound on the dull cold ear of death.*”†

It may be thought, and I fear *it is*, too presumptuous in a *Layman* to find such fault with a mode of expression so common, so highly sanctioned and used by the Christian Advocate in the University of Cambridge, an accomplished scholar and able theologian,—when even inspired writers seem now to us to have set the example,—but those among them who have done so in the strongest manner, have proved beyond question, that they did not in reality attach the same meaning to such a style of speaking of the deceased, as many of us now do; and the new light which our blessed Lord and his disciples threw on the nature and future prospects of the soul, should render us cautious, how we indulge in using some of the dark expressions of the Old Testament

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\* Alluding to the Millennium, or reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth; but the Jews thought departed saints were to rise and join in its pleasures, and this was their understanding of *the resurrection* which is alluded to in Scripture, as being a belief current among them before the coming of Christ.

† Christianity always progressive; being the Christian Advocate’s publication for the year 1829, by Hugh J. Rose, B. D. p. 25.

writers, who nevertheless seem all to have believed that they would not be gathered to their fathers *in the grave*, but that the freed soul flew to the general mansion of spirits (*sheol* as they named it) where those of their ancestors were assembled in the custody of God, to wait the time of their liberation—the day of judgment and of redemption.

A writer so eminent as Mr. Rose should consider the influence of his example (unless he really means to inculcate the sleep of the soul) and of the tendency which such views ~~may~~ have on the minds of others. If the grave be a place where all which is now in us, and forms the living man, is to find a long and dreary night in death, out of which the last trumpet only can awaken us, the best Christian who entertains such an idea must shrink from death with shuddering. It is little excuse or explanation to say, that *only the body is meant* (if Mr. Rose merely does so) for an author's meaning can only be gathered from his words, and his expressions make no such limitations, but speak of the whole man together as in death indifferent to and unconscious of all which is passing on earth, or any where else, (for *universe* is the word used) and not in a state to enjoy the information that the whole inhabitants of this world had become sincere Christians. Even if the body alone is alluded to, such a style is improper :—unquestionably, the body while in the grave knows nothing, and is indifferent to all which is done under the sun ; but even in life, the external senses of the body only received and conveyed to the soul as mere instruments, what was to be seen, or heard, or felt ; and the body *itself*, while alive, neither thought nor perceived. It was *the soul* which it held, that did this, and it still lives while the body is no longer a body ; with probably even superior powers of perception to those which it had while alive, else natural instinct has been implanted in all nations to deceive,—the tradition of every age is founded in error,—many passages in Scripture have been written to lead us into a mistaken belief, or to keep us in ignorance on a material point ; yet often referred to, and although the

Church has embodied it in her articles of belief and in her services,\* yet we should not give credit to it !

Do those who expect to hear nothing when the body is dead, because they cannot do it through "the dull cold ear of death," or see nothing because they cannot do it through the sightless eye of the grave, think that St. Paul, when he spoke of what his soul was to experience when absent from the body, alluded only to the joys of heaven or after the resurrection, when he shall *not* be absent from the body,—do they believe it impossible for the soul to hear or see ~~but~~ solely by means of the eyes and ears of the body ? Can they insist on us to credit that this Apostle, who panted to be in the separate state, and which he plainly thought would prove of such an *immediate* advantage to him (else his wish was not consistent with common sense) is still insensible and indifferent whether his Master's kingdom shall be acknowledged by all the world ? and although he cannot himself see or hear what is doing upon earth, must we infer, that he therefore knows nothing about it, when thousands of Christian souls are daily leaving this world to be where he is residing ? Immediate intelligence is conveyed, even to where the holy angels abide, of what is doing here ; if a sinner repent and is forgiven, they know it soon after, and rejoice :—now, *their* place is most probably *farther* from the earth than *Hades*, the residence of departed souls ; at any rate, certainly not nearer, and we believe that there is a constant communication between the earth and heaven, by means of angels, or spiritual beings. The Bible records many of their missions,—their goings and returnings. St. Paul also tells us that we are encompassed with a great number of witnesses,\* which seems to allude to unseen beings of a superior order to ourselves, who may observe our conduct, and be ready to carry our souls to their appointed place until the day of judgment. As there is an entire belief among some that the soul does actually sleep insensibly after death, distinctness is very necessary, in order to show a contrary

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\* Heb. xii. 1.



opinion, *where it is entertained*, and we ought not now to be left to *suppose* a meaning different from what the words most plainly convey.

From an anxious wish to counteract such feelings regarding the dead under many of the different ways in which these misleading conceptions of death are expressed, and to show unsoundness in them all, I may be held by some to have noticed too many instances; but such remarks as the present are so unusual, and these modes of expression have so strong a tendency to foster desponding ideas, that they cannot be too forcibly exposed in their various guise. One example could not have afforded sufficient scope for establishing another better and more consoling train of thought on this subject.

How much more correct than Mr. Rose's mode of speaking of the dead, is the idea of the departed as conveyed by the language of Dr. Watts, in his Discourse on the death of Sir John Hartopp.—“Doubtless the spirits of the just in heaven\* are not utterly unacquainted with the affairs of the kingdom of Christ on earth. He rejoices and will rejoice among his fellow-saints when happy tidings of the militant church, or of the religious interests of Great Britain, are brought to the upper world by ministering angels. He waits for the full accomplishment of all the promises of Christ to his Church.”

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\* From other passages, it is plain that Dr. Watts must here mean merely a happy or heavenly mansion for disembodied souls, but not the highest heaven, or that region in which we are to have our eternal abode.

## CHAPTER III.

The nature of Soul and Body considered.

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“Those who believe that death does not put an end to their being, but only removes them out of this body which rots in the grave, while their souls survive, live, and act, and may be happy in a separate state, should carefully consider this distinction between soul and body, which would teach them a most divine and heavenly wisdom.”

Sherlock's Discourse on Death, Chap. I. sect. 2.

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**B**EFORE proceeding to direct our exclusive attention to the state of our spirits after death, and to the region where they retire to their rest after the cares of life on earth, it will be proper, in the first place, to inquire into the nature of soul and body, their connexion and dependence on each other; and whether, from what we can discover, it appear possible or probable, that the soul can subsist as a conscious Being without its earthly body, or if this is a truth revealed to us by Holy Writ.

We have an instinctive assurance within us, whether we listen to it or not, that our spirits will so continue able to exercise all their mental powers in another region after death; and, generally speaking, all the nations of the earth have always believed in its dictates. Here, if ever, the voice of Nature may be considered as the voice of God. A few individual philosophers, wishing to show themselves wiser on this point than their fellow mortals, have with acknowledged difficulty persuaded themselves, first to doubt and then to

disbelieve in a continued consciousness of the soul after the body falls, because philosophy cannot absolutely prove to demonstration either this or a future immortality ; to begin, as some still suppose, only at the last day,—for, if the soul is to be senseless during the dissolution of the body, *immortality* could not be said to *begin* until the resurrection. They have been followed by those who are contented to let others inquire into and decide on this most important question, and from living as if they were never to die, or had no hopes of happiness hereafter, but every thing to dread, they believe what they wish to be true,—either in annihilation, or, if they have not been able to bring themselves to this pitch of infidel philosophic wisdom, then they hope for at least a long insensible sleep in the grave.

On the importance of this inquiry, I may quote the words of the Rev. Mr. Huntingford, who is of opinion that “no study can be more proper, none more interesting to an intellectual being than that, of which it is the object to render him as well acquainted as possible with his own nature and ultimate destination. Accordingly we find, as might have been expected, that from very early times, men of the highest attainments have applied to the investigation of this subject all the powers of mind by which they were distinguished.”\*

It is the general opinion that there is some distinct power called *the soul*, which resides in our corporeal frames when alive,—which directs all the motions of the body,—our loves, our hatreds,—our speech, &c.—that this power or being, both in ourselves and in others, is invisible to our mortal eyes ; not made up of parts in any degree like the body, and therefore not liable to be dissolved or die ; that consciousness is necessary to its existence, and therefore cannot be disunited from it. There is no savage nation so ignorant as not to expect some future life ; on which notion, indeed, is founded

\* Introduction to “Testimonies in proof of the separate existence of the soul.” 1829.

every system of religion, however rude. The natives of America had this knowledge before the arrival of Columbus ;\* the Esquimaux and the Aborigines of New Holland, although sunk the lowest in the human scale, cherish the hope of an after-state of existence. Nature, then, instructs all, that there is such a something within us as the soul—acting as a director of that living machine which we call *the body* ; and this feeling, like all *intuition* which arises in the animal world, must come from the Creator, and has been given us for good and wise purposes. The voice of the Deity to man in ancient times, either when he was awake or in visions of the night, we term *direct revelation*, and it confirms the impression which springs from intuition. The powers of *reason*, which God enables us to exert, furnish additional proof of the same fact.

When Socrates (one of the wisest of the heathen philosophers) was dying, a friend wished to receive directions about his funeral :—"Bury me," said the sage, "wherever you please, provided you can catch me ; for it seems that I, Socrates, who now reason with you, cannot convince you that when I quit this lifeless body, I shall be no longer present."† Cicero has in different places of his works shown that he held a similar opinion of his own nature—"It is not you," he writes on one occasion, "but your *body*, which is mortal : for you are not what you appear to be ; but *it is the mind*

\* This is a curious and important fact. Mr. Irving, in his life of Columbus, tells us, that in the great island of St. Domingo, "they had confused notions of the existence of the soul when separated from the body, and believed in apparitions of the deceased. They had an idea that the spirits of good men after death were reunited to the spirits of those they had most loved, and to those of their ancestors : they were transported to a happy region.—" Chap. XXI. In the same work, an interesting anecdote is given of a venerable Indian, a native of Cuba, who told Columbus that they believed souls went after death to a dismal or to a delightful place, according as their lives on earth had been.

Abridged Life of Columbus. Family Lib.

† Quoted, with concurrence in the belief, by that eminent physiologist, John Abernethy, in a lecture delivered by him before the Royal College of Surgeons, London, on the system of Phrenology

*which is the man.*”\* The celebrated address of the Roman Emperor Adrian to his soul when he was dying, is an interesting instance of the belief in an after state which forces itself upon the human mind, particularly when the scenes of this world are fast sinking from our view for ever :—

“ Animula, vagula, blandula,  
Hospes, comesque corporis,  
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,  
Pallidula, rigida, nudula ?  
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos.”

Which may be thus freely translated :—

Ethereal spirit, child of air !  
Once cheerful guest within my breast ;  
Where dost thou from thy place repair,  
Where do at last thy wanderings rest ?

Ye think not now of mirth but flight,  
And seem'st all startl'd, shiv'ring, dying ;  
This body soon must sink in night—  
Whilst thou shalt distant far be flying !

The Rev. Dr. Blair thus expresses himself on the nature of soul and body, when speaking of the death of the latter :—  
“ Such a shock is apparently suffered by the soul at death, as at first view might lead us to suspect that it was sharing the same fate with the body. Notwithstanding this, there are clear proofs that the body and the soul, though at present closely connected by divine appointment with one another, are, however, substances of different and dissimilar natures. Matter, of which the body is composed, is a substance, altogether dead and passive, and cannot be put in motion without some external impulse. Whereas the soul hath within itself a principle of motion, activity, and life. Between the laws of matter and the action of thought, there is so little resemblance, or rather so much opposition, that

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\* The words of Cicero are—“ *Tu habeto, te non esse mortalem, sed corpus; nec enim is es quem forma ista declarat, sed mens cujusque is est quisque.*”

mankind have in general agreed in holding the soul to be an immaterial substance ; that is, a substance the nature of which we cannot explain or define farther than that it is a substance quite distinct from matter. This being once admitted, it clearly follows, that since thought depends not upon matter, from the dissolution of the material part, we have no ground to infer the destruction of the thinking part of man."

Whether man, if he had been left entirely to his own judgment and reasoning powers, would have discovered that he had a soul—that his mind or will was distinct from his corporeal frame, it is hard to say ; but when the Creator communicated the fact to us through the medium of what is well known under the denomination of *instinct* or *intuition*,\* then we can easily find reasons and weighty arguments for its truth, and are sometimes led to fancy these proceed entirely from our own wisdom. The train of reasoning nevertheless may seem to have suggested itself very naturally, and is thus detailed by Dr. Crombie :—"When man becomes acquainted with the various faculties of his mind, and what they are capable of accomplishing, observing also the subserviency of the body to the government of the will, he perceives that his mental powers are so unlike to the qualities and properties of gross matter, that they must belong, he concludes, to something of a more refined character than brute material substance. Unable, however, to divest himself of the notion that nothing can exist which may not be seen or touched, he forms a conception of some attenuated matter, some aerial being, by whatever name it may be called, whether soul, or breath, or spirit, which lives and thinks within him. It is still, however, material ; and he perceives, on reflection, that the difficulty, though apparently diminished, is not removed. He is thence led to proceed one step farther, and to conclude, that the simple individual being, which he believes himself to be, can have no resemblance to

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\* Dr. Thomas Brown justly terms instinct "an internal revelation from on high."

matter which is composed of parts.”—“The philosopher presumes not to say what the soul is ; but he is persuaded that it is not material. He denies it to be a property or an effect ; and affirms it to be a substance and a cause, imperceptible indeed by corporeal organs, but known, through internal sense and reflection, by its powers and properties, as matter is known, through its external sense, by its sensible qualities.”\*

Mr. Drew, by a fair and forcible train of natural reasoning, proves that the soul must be an uncompounded essence, differing in its qualities from all known properties of matter—therefore cannot be subject to death by dissolution as the body is ;—that it must be immortal from the very nature given it by God ; and that consciousness is an inherent quality which it therefore cannot lose by the death of the mortal frame in which it merely resides while here, and uses as its means of communicating with this world.†

It has been often stated as an objection to the separate conscious being of the soul, that it could not act without the body, by which in life here it sees and hears ; but an intimate connexion with the bodily frame does not necessarily imply, that the governing spirit is entirely dependent upon it and an inherent quality or function of the visible or material part of man ; and this may be shown by revelation, by arguments, and by facts, all tending to prove the evident independence in certain cases of the one upon the other, from which the general inference may fairly be drawn, that the soul does not suffer even a temporary state of inactivity or insensibility on the death of the body, and consequently must live on in possession of its present and probably new and much superior faculties when the body lies dead and dissolved.

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\* Natural Theology, &c. Vol. II. p. 452—4.

† An original essay on the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, founded solely on physical and rational principles, by Samuel Drew. A.M. 5th edit. 1831.

We cannot explain how the angelic spirits act independently of body, and until we can do so, we cannot expect to be able to determine *in what mode* the soul acts without the aid of corporeal organs. We believe that the great Father and God of the universe is a Spirit,\* and does not act by means of a bodily frame, and this being admitted, removes any objection which might be brought against the possibility of a spirit acting by its own power and without corporeal organs.†

There can be no reasonable doubt, that the soul, when entirely clear of the body, can exert both intelligence and activity. It can even do so without the aid of the body in many things while in it, as shall soon be illustrated. Even now we cannot explain how our souls see and hear,—how we think or understand,—how we remember least of all, though we have continual experience of all these operations in ourselves. And must it be thought strange, that we cannot tell how our souls shall understand and operate when out of their bodies, that being a state of which we never yet had any experience? Indeed, while our souls are wrapped in this flesh, we can no more imagine how they shall act when divested of it, than a child in the womb (even though we should suppose it to have the actual understanding of an adult person) can conceive what kind of life or world this is into which it is afterwards to be born. We can no more conceive the manner of the soul's operation when absent from the body, than a man born blind can understand a discourse on colours; or comprehend all the wonders and mysteries of the science of Optics. Who can take upon himself to say, that it is impossible man can afterwards have more than the senses which he at present possesses, or that those which he has may not be increased in a wonderful degree!

\* St. John iv. 24.

† "By the soul," says Archbishop Tillotson, "we mean a part of man distinct from his body, or a principle in him which is not matter," again—"supposing that there is a God, who is essentially a spirit, there can be no doubt of the possibility of such a thing as a spirit."



It is true, we cannot now conceive a sense which we have not, more than the blind man could imagine a red colour when he likened his idea of it to something resembling *the sound of a trumpet*; but that Being who endowed us with the five senses which we possess, could undoubtedly bestow others on us, fitted for that new and different sphere in which we shall exist when we throw off the mortal habitation or clothing, which now obscures the brighter perceptions and faculties of the soul. The present mortal bodies which confine our souls, may restrain them from the free exercise of their more perfect senses, and when freed and disencumbered of mortality, souls may be able to act in far higher perfection. But we are not to consider that in the *separate state*, the soul is at the height of its powers. It shall not be so until it receives its glorified body at the resurrection of the just.

Mr. Dick is of opinion "that superior beings connected with other worlds have additional senses to those which we possess, especially when we consider the general analogy of nature, and the gradations which exist among organized beings in our world. It forms no reason why we should deny that such senses exist, because we can offer no distinct conceptions of any senses besides those which we possess."—"To limit the number of senses, which intelligent organized beings may possess, to five which have been bestowed upon man, would be to set bounds to the infinite wisdom and skill of the Creator; who in all his works has displayed an endless variety in the manner of accomplishing his designs."\*

"What an additional fund of knowledge," asks the Rev. Dr. Crombie, "might not an additional sense present to us? How many difficulties might it not remove? How many mysterious facts might it not explain? How many things might it not show to be possible, which at present we deem impossible?"—"When we consider what a field of knowledge is furnished by the visual organ in addition to what is afforded by the four other senses, we may easily conceive,

that another sense still more capacious and more acute, might explain and render credible many phenomena which appear to us as unaccountable as the perceptions of seeing are incredible to a blind man."

When our souls go out of this world, they may pass into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as naturally as we came into the present. And this new state may probably be a social one, indeed, *must* be so, for our souls shall of course go whither all those of human kind have gone before us. It would be a shortness of thought scarce credible to imagine that no system or course of things can be natural but only what we see at present.

"In a future state," say the Rev. Drs. Gerard, "men will probably find themselves endued with new powers, which in the present state lie wholly latent; for in every new state to which we see man or other animals rise, there is an expansion of new powers suitable to it, for which their former state gave no scope: but of the nature of these powers we can form no possible conjecture."—"All our present powers of reflection will continue in a future state, for they do not appear to have, even at present, any such dependence for their exercise on the body, as that its dissolution at death should destroy or alter them."—"Man's future state will be a social one, for the whole constitution of our nature is social: and its inhabitants will have such difference of capacities, characters, and situations as may fit them for social union."\*

When our Lord wished to convince his disciples after his resurrection, that the body in which he appeared to them was a real body, and that he was not a *spirit* or apparition, as they at first supposed, he bade them touch and handle him: for, he said, "*a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have,*" and when they observed him walking upon

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\* Compendious view of the evidences of natural and revealed religion, by the Rev. Drs. Alexander and Gilbert Gerard, Professors of Divinity, King's College, Old Aberdeen.

the sea towards their ship, they were afraid, and thought they saw a spirit. In neither case did he tell them such a thing was but a fancy: so far from this, his words most plainly and directly confirm the existence of such natures.

St. John speaks of having *seen* the disembodied souls of the departed saints,\* and it has been argued that this must be considered entirely emblematic, because the soul separate from the body "is not an object of sight,"† and "whatever is seen must be material."† But the argument here is utterly inapplicable. St. John did not see them through the medium of his bodily organs, for he tells us that it was while he was *in the spirit*:‡ The eyes are not necessary for the spirit to see, being only the *media* of conveying the forms and colours of objects to the mind, and to suppose that the soul could not see when out of the body by its own perceptions, would be great presumption in us who cannot explain in what manner the soul perceives when in the body, knowing only that the representations of objects are delineated on the *retina* of the eye;—and *how* a knowledge of them is conveyed to the brain by means of the optic nerve, is beyond all human ingenuity.

The sacred writers uniformly represent the body merely as the clothing of the spirit, so that the soul is with respect to the body, what the body itself is with respect to the garment that it wears. They describe death as the *putting off* of the body; therefore, as the man, who lays aside his clothes, does not also throw off his body with them, so neither do we at death put off our spirits to sleep in the grave with their former habitations. If *both* are supposed to *sink* into the state of death and oblivion together, there will be no meaning in our Saviour's distinction between them—"fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, but rather fear Him who can kill both soul and body." If the death of the body laid the soul into a torpid sleep, then

\* Rev. vi. 9.

† Scripture Revelations of a Future State.

‡ See Considerations on the condition of the Soul in the intermediate state.  
p. 54.

the man who killed the first might be said to kill the second also, as the body shall be one day alive again, and be rejoined to the soul.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, both are said to have died and been buried, while the soul of the one was carried away by angels to a state of blessedness, and the other consigned to a state of misery. Christ on the cross, said—"Father into thy hands I commend my spirit," and Stephen, when expiring, uttered a similar exclamation. St. Paul doubted whether his soul was translated during a vision into the third heaven and into paradise;\* and many other examples might be given from the sacred writings, of the soul and body being considered as distinct, though connected during life, and separated at death, remaining while dead in different places—the one sensible and entire, while the other is dissolved and incorporated with the ground.

Nor was this doctrine new to the Jews in the time of our Lord. However little was revealed to them in their law concerning the future state of man, it was the general belief that the soul exists, and can act, or enjoy and suffer, after the dissolution of the body. On this belief were founded the practice of witchcraft and necromancy, and the power which sorcerers pretended, or (in some instances) really did possess, of calling up the ghosts of the deceased by the aid of demons, of which the history of the Witch of Endor is a striking proof. Whatever explanation we give of the appearance of the spirit of Samuel, the transaction altogether clearly proves the common belief at the time, that the spirits of the dead continued to live in such a state of existence as rendered it possible by supernatural aid to hold communication with them. In the time of our Saviour, many ages after, the same belief we find to have prevailed; and the denial of spirits is mentioned in the book of Acts as one of the errors

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\* I have elsewhere suggested that St. Paul may not have meant *himself*, but another person; but, as I find all the best authorities of a different opinion, I have little doubt that my readers will be inclined to adopt the understanding of the Apostle's expressions which I have given above.

of the Sadducees. To this common opinion the Evangelists and Apostles gave their express sanction, and delivered it as part of that revelation of the will of God which they were commanded to publish.

Many Christian writers who have denied the doctrine of an intermediate state, freely admit that the nature of the soul and of the body is essentially different and distinct, and I am at a loss to understand how any one who believes the Scriptures can think himself a good Christian, and yet hold, as many do, that the soul is so connected with the body as to fall by the same death-blow and sink into the grave, which is a doctrine at direct variance with many passages in these writings.

If the soul be a mere property or quality of the brain, then it must unquestionably become insensible and die with the body. It must continue totally unconscious as long as the body does ; and although He who at first formed the outward frame of man, could no doubt revive the conscious powers of the soul at the resurrection, (when a changed and immortal body shall spring to life,) yet in this case, the one would have no superiority over the other in being immortal, for both then enter upon an eternal state.

In other words—if the mental faculties arise merely from the construction or substance of certain bodily organs, then by the destruction or separation of these organs, the mind, with all its powers, must cease to exist ; or, at least, if it still adhered to the separated particles of matter, it could only be again able to act or exert itself on their coming together as they were before ; but this supposes the mind to be like matter separable into parts, which it is incapable of being. If consciousness depends on the brain for its existence, it would be absurd to suppose it to continue when this organ is fallen into dust, or dissolved into air by putrefaction. If there be nothing then distinct from the bodily frame, that change which dissolves the body must destroy the capacity of feeling, because it destroys that which gave rise to feeling. The particles of the body might be believed capable of coming together again by Almighty power, and

of being arranged as they were before, or in such a manner as to produce *mind* with all its various faculties; but while the body ~~is~~ dead, so must the soul also, if the one be wholly dependent on the other. The soul or mind, if this were the fact, ~~would~~ consist of certain particles capable of remembering, loving, hating, &c. all disjoined at death, and as each could not be supposed to retain an individual consciousness, then it must be imagined that consciousness only arises when they are all conjoined, and the body is alive.

“If matter be not all, or rather, if matter have nothing in common with thought, but be absolutely and wholly distinct from the thinking principle, the decay of matter cannot be considered indicative of the decay of mind, unless some other reason can be shown for the mental dissolution than the mere external decay itself; still less can it be considered as indicative of such mental decay, if every notion which we are led to form of the mind, imply qualities inconsistent with the very possibility of such a change of decomposition as the body exhibits.”\*

“The great inquiry then is, whether our thoughts and feelings be, in the strictest sense of the term, particles of matter, affected in a certain manner in that which we term an organ,”—or—“Is there any principle of thought and feeling, then, distinct from that extended divisible mass, which we term the corporeal frame?”†

The Epicurean philosophers taught that the soul is a fine or subtile kind of air, composed of primitive atoms. The Cartesians believed thinking to be the essence of the soul, and thus deduced its immateriality and consequent immortality. Spinoza and numerous materialists maintained that nothing exists in the world besides matter—therefore the soul must be matter—therefore it must also be the same as that of some part of the visible body:—conclusions, it will be seen, not even logically or physically founded on the very assertion upon which they are made to rest. They might have as well insisted that nothing could be explained or un-

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\* Brown's Lectures on the Philosophy of Mind.

† Ibid.

derstood, but what they knew, and which was within the limits of their simple comprehension.

“The materialist,” says Dr. Crombie, “disclaims the hypothesis that the brain is merely an organ, this necessarily implying an agent ; and contends, that the brain is itself the thinking substance. That I, as a conscious, intelligent, willing being, and the brain are one and the same thing.”—Dr. Priestly has affirmed, “that it is the eye only that sees, the ear that hears, and the nose that smells,”—an assertion that many facts disprove, and yet he is joined by so eminent a physiologist as Mr. Laurence, who cannot surely have reflected on the phenomena of sleep-walking, which alone must convince of the contrary, and show that these are merely organs. When a person speaks of *himself* he does not mean his *brain*, neither does he suppose that the muscles are the sources of motion but the instruments, in the same way as the brain is the organ first acted on by the thoughts, but not the thinking being ; the *agency* of the brain being merely necessary in the *communication*, and the brain seems to be as different from the person willing, as the muscles, the tendons, or the nerves.

The eyes do not see, nor the ears hear, nor the tongue speak of *themselves*.—they are merely the instruments made use of by the soul when it chooses to receive external impressions, (which are conveyed to the sensorium by means of the nerves proceeding from these organs,) or to communicate with others. An eye, when newly taken out of the head of a recently killed animal, may be observed to have the picture of objects refracted on its retina, the same as when connected with the living brain, but it is merely a very perfect optical instrument, and cannot be said to *see of itself* more than a telescope does when we are looking through it. Even the representation of an object on the living eye, or a sound striking on the ear, is not sufficient to convey the impression to the mind, unless the latter be attentive and disposed to receive it ; *making use*, in short, at the time, of its instruments of perception ; but the mind is often observant of what is going on with-

out any sensible effort. How often does *abstraction* prevent sounds from being heard, and objects from being seen, although the ear had been struck, and the eye received the impression. Even pain may be unfelt, although the nerves may carry the sensation to the brain, as they do the sense of objects which strike the eye or sounds from the ear. The soul's not being at times aware of these communications which have actually reached the brain, shows that it cannot be this organ which thinks or perceives, and proves that the soul is something which can make use of its powers or not as it pleases. The mind of an *absent* person (to use a well understood term) is often so wrapt up in its own cogitations as to know nothing of what is passing outwardly: he sees not the person standing before him, nor hears the noise which is making his ears to tingle. It is clearly not *matter*, therefore, that perceives, any more than it is the feet that determine to go a journey, or the eyes that resolve to look at any thing.

If it be admitted that the soul is not dependent on the organization of the brain, or on any part of the body, it is not a necessary consequence that it is mere *empty space*, or that it has no body of its own nature, because we cannot see it at present, or even comprehend it. We never saw it when in the body, nor in the act of leaving it, and are ignorant how its will moves a finger, (which it can yet do almost with the rapidity of thought,) or how it performs any act of life. We have many examples in Holy Writ of the human eyes, and even those of inferior animals—Balaam's ass for instance—being opened by the power of God to behold what, in their ordinary state, they could not see, and we therefore have no ground to assume that every thing can be seen by eyes such as ours are constituted. I do not refer exclusively to mere spiritual beings, (to whom we assign, in imagination, a sort of aerial nature,) but to real material structures. Our Lord's material body was rendered visible and invisible by him at pleasure, both before and after his resurrection from the state of the dead, when it was capable, not only of being seen, but of being felt, and able to speak and eat, the same



as any other living body could. There is therefore, by the way, *nothing* impossible in our being surrounded on the earth by beings of material natures without our seeing them. The eyes of Balaam were in a moment rendered fit to behold the Lord \* standing before him with a sword in his hand, and to the servant of Elisha, a new sense (we may say) was imparted, when he saw "the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."†

Great disputes have arisen among metaphysicians about the particular nature of the soul, whether it is *material* or *immaterial*,—two terms which are seldom so well defined as they ought to be. The first is commonly understood to mean that the soul is *matter*, however light or aerial; and the second, that it is quite distinct from all matter, and independent of it, being only mere empty space, a principle, quality, power, thought, or described by some term tending only to confound all definite notions. But *materiality*, when applied to the soul, I apprehend, more properly implies, that it is a property or quality attached to the brain, or to some part of the bodily frame; lives while the body lives, and dies or becomes insensible when the body dies, but shall revive also with it again;—that it cannot exist in a state of absolute separation from the body, and therefore is not immortal of itself. *Immaterialism*, on the other hand, I do not think ought to mean mere nothing in substance, or empty space, but only something quite different from the visible matter of the body, or any thing of the same nature,—not made up of parts, and consequently not liable to decomposition by the common laws of all matter with which we are acquainted—that its particular nature is as yet incomprehensible, but that it is able to subsist as a Being, conscious and active when the body is fallen to dust, and that it may have some subtle, invisible vehicle, perhaps not very dissimilar to light-

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\* The Hebrew which our translators generally render "*Angel of the Lord*," signifies *God himself*,—one of the persons of the Godhead, (generally the *Second*) as the slightest consideration even of the context will prove must be the case in most instances where the Hebrew word *Malak* is used.

† 2 Kings vi. 17.

ning, to which we cannot apply the term *matter* in its usual acceptation, and yet this fluid cannot be called empty space.

Mr. Locke asks—could not God have endowed matter with the power of thought?—but this is an unfair mode of putting the question. It is not what the Creator *could* have done, but what he *has* done, which we are inquiring, and it is a very just observation of Sir Humphry Davy's, that it might as well be asked whether God could not have made a house its own tenant?\*

Materialists, or those who believe that the soul must follow the fate of the body, and remain insensible when the latter does, attach so much importance to this opinion of Mr. Locke's, (which certainly does seem to favour such ideas) that I shall quote the observations of a most acute and highly esteemed moral philosopher respecting it, which will show how untenable it must be considered—"I cannot but think," says Dr. Brown,† "that the too great caution of Mr. Locke, by giving the sanction of his eminent name to the possibility, at least, of the superaddition of thought as a mere quality, to a system of particles‡ which, as a number of particles, have no thought, yet have, as a whole, what they have not as parts of that whole, has tended in a great degree to shelter the manifest inconsistency of the doctrine of the materialist. He was unwilling to limit the divine power; and from the obscurity of our notion of the connexion of the feelings of the mind, in any manner, with the changes induced in the bodily frame, he conceived that the annexation of thought to the system of particles itself, would be but a slight addition to difficulties that must at any rate be admitted. He forgot, however, that a system of particles is but a name for the separate particles which alone have any real existence in nature; that the affirmation of what is contradictory is very different from the mere admission of igno-

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\* Consolations in Travel, or Last Days of a Philosopher.

† Late Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh.

‡ All matter is divisible into particles or atoms, and the brain being matter, is, of course, capable of being so divided. The whole body of man is a system or collection of particles which may be separated.

rance.”—“It is no daring limitation of the divine power to suppose that even the Omnipotent himself cannot confound the mathematical properties of squares and hexagons; and it would be no act of irreverence to his power though it were capable of doing every thing which is not contradictory, to suppose that he cannot give to a system of organs a quality wholly distinct from the qualities of all the separate parts: since the organ itself is only a name which we give to those parts, that are all which truly exist as the organ.”\*

Some have considered this question of little consequence, but I am not of the same way of thinking; for if all which is in us is of such a material nature as to be attached to the matter of the body, it then inevitably follows that the dissolution of the animal frame, and the cessation of sense or consciousness in the soul go together. The inference is natural that there is an end of the man, at least that till the resurrection he is nothing, and if this be so, then even his future immortality becomes very doubtful, since the soul, which Scripture holds as immortal, is not more so than the body, which it always distinguishes as mortal: but, if there is lodged in these bodies a mind which is of a substance or essence entirely distinct from the body, and that may subsist independent of it, then quite other thoughts and views will be suggested to us, and we do not fear at death that we shall then enter on “the first dark day of nothingness,” as Lord Byron expresses the state of man which then commences; and as many, (who fancy themselves good Christians) agree with him in, hoping only for a return to a sense of mental feeling after the rising of their bodies, when perhaps some thousand years have elapsed.

Those materialists who hold the doctrine that the soul is but a *quality* or *property* of the brain, which it will again be endued with at the resurrection, must of course consider the dead body or its remains as all of the man which exists; for mere qualities or properties cannot exist without that on which they depend and emanate from. Such philosophers

must admit that the departed lie in their graves senseless and returned to dust, the soul following the fate of the body. They would see no mistaken idea of the dead in the lines which tell us that—

“Ev’n the great Cæsar dead and turned to clay,  
May stop a hole to keep the wind away!”

Or in the following epitaph on a Dutchman :—

“Return’d to earth, beneath this sod,  
Lies what was Vander Hildenbrod;  
But he will rise by God’s direction;  
And waken at the resurrection.”

—“And your body shall be given to be dissected,”—said the judge, to a hardened murderer of the lower order, who was tried a short time ago in Edinburgh.—“Thank you, my Lord,” answered the prisoner, “*it is well you cannot dissect the soul.*” Thus the most learned and the most ignorant amongst us believe the soul to be of a distinct and uncompounded nature;\* but the doctrines of phrenologists as well as materialists have a great and evil tendency to lead into a belief of its being made up of parts in some measure like the body;—that by the scalpel of the anatomist, and by measurement of the head, they can divide and distinguish the different dispositions, propensities, and powers of the spirit or mind. I know that an inference to this extent is denied by the supporters of that delusive science, but when they ascribe various distinct *inherent* properties and faculties to certain parts of the brain which they separate according to a fanciful theory into imaginary portions or organs, and affirm that the mind depends for all its faculties on the relative proportional *size* which these parts bear to each other—were this true, we should naturally draw the conclusion that the

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\* “Uneducated reason, and the most scientific research, equally induce us to believe that we are composed of an assemblage of organs formed of common inert matter, such as may be seen after death; a principle of life and action; and a sentient and rational faculty; all intimately connected, *yet each distinct from the other.*”

soul itself can be so divided. According to phrenology, physical reasons may explain at least the primary causes of crime, (or natural stimulants thereto) and of any human action or propensity ; but the pliability of its doctrines and the learning of its professors are most eminently shown in explaining why a particular organization does not sometimes actually produce the corresponding predicted consequences, and *demonstrating* that it *ought* and *would* have done so but for certain other organic hindrances or countervailing conformations which were at first overlooked ! To determine on a man's character—on his good or evil disposition; according to the *shape* of his head or the relative proportions which one part bears to another, without having any standard to refer to, seems very absurd ; and as to pretending to ascertain the exact divisions of the brain from the shape of the head, we have the opinion of the best anatomists that it is impossible, and that the brain is *not* so divided as phrenologists wish to persuade us. Were it divided as accurately as the lines on their plaster casts would indicate—were every *bump* outside accompanied by a correspondent hollow inside—were the *thickness* of skulls and their integuments uniform, or even so in the same *cranium*, to be known by looking at the living head, and the size and shape of the innermost compartments of the brain to be ascertained by outward appearances—then such conclusions as to character would at least have a *seeming* better foundation. Phrenology is said by its supporters to be a doctrine founded upon *facts* invariably observed ; but many facts have been brought to contradict its conclusions. The consideration of these, however, would carry us much farther than is here necessary.

The operation of reason and understanding, and the activity of our thoughts, are incompatible with the soul being matter in the same sense as our bodies are. The multitude of distinct ideas and notions which dwell in our souls, are none of them accountable from matter. The reason and judgment can overrule the reports of our senses, and correct the errors and deceptions of them. One sense, for instance,

tells us, that things at a distance are less than our reason assures us they really are in themselves : as that the body of the sun is only a foot in diameter, but our judgment informs us otherwise. *The reason* is continually correcting the reports of the eye, for there is no sense which is so liable to be deceived as the sight. It is thus mistaken from appearances much oftener than we imagine, but so rapidly does reason set us right when deceived in this respect, that we are frequently not aware that we have been so.

Now, what is the principle which controls our senses and corrects the deceptions of them ? If the soul be mere *matter*, it can only judge of things according to the impressions which are made upon our senses : but we judge otherwise, and see cause to do so many times. Therefore it must be some higher principle which judges of things, not by the material impressions which they make upon our senses, but by other measures.

As all the nerves terminate in the brain, or form a continued communication from it to every part of the body, it might be imagined that it is *the brain* which sees, hears, &c. because all the bodily senses convey what is impressed on them to that organ. But even here, experience proves that life or thought is not absolutely inherent in, or forms a part of the brain, as materialists would fain establish. They are most intimately *connected*, but not *one*. The *head* seems more particularly the *residence* of the spirit : it has been called *the palace of the soul* ; but an *inhabitant* of any dwelling does not form a *part* of that dwelling, or is necessarily dependent on it for life or consciousness. "If the brain," says Dr. Crombie, "be the thinking substance, it is evident, from its unceasing change, and repeated renovations, that identity of substance is not necessary to the feeling of personal identity."\* Can it then be fairly affirmed that the brain itself feels pleasure or pain ? Is it occasionally benevolent, sorrowful, angry ? "It may undergo," as Dr. C. observes, "certain changes by the influence of these passions,

but it is not *the being* that is pleased, or offended, that is dejected, or rejoices,—that fears, or hopes, that wills, or reasons.” The power to move a limb depends on the sensibility of the appropriate nerves being able to convey the command (we cannot say *how*) to the muscles to do their duty,—to contract and relax as necessary, and on the latter being in the state of vigour requisite, but we must not confound the instrument with the artificer. Indeed the modern theory of materialism has been entirely overturned by reasonings from facts—from experience. Dr. Ferriar proves by evidence, apparently complete and indisputable, that every part of the brain has been injured, and a great proportion of it lost without affecting the act of thought.\*

“Many cases,” says the Rev. Mr. Rennel, “have passed under my own observation, where the failure of voice, coldness of the extremities, a pulse scarcely sensible, and other symptoms have announced to the worn-out constitution, the approach of dissolution, and yet the memory, the judgment, and even the fancy itself of the aged patient were unabated. In age as well as in disease at an earlier period, when the taper of life has been exhausted even to its last spark, and extinction was now rapidly advancing, the mind, so far from partaking in the decay or the destruction of the body, has appeared to be endowed with a strength and a clearness of intellectual vision, increasing gradually as the moment of its emancipation was now approaching.”†

Consumption, during its last stages, is a disease in which the above is often illustrated by striking examples. When the whole frame seems reduced to the utmost degree of feebleness consistent with being able to support the glimmering flame of life, the mind has often been known to flash out with a brightness of conception, and a vigour never surpassed when the body is in full and robust health. Many instances have been known, where, after the cold hand of

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\* See *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*. Vol. IV.

† Remarks on Scepticism, p. 109.

death had rendered the whole limbs powerless and dead, with the pulses of life for ever stopped in them as belonging to a mortal,—while his icy approaches were fast nearing to the vital parts—that even then the mind showed undiminished powers, although the feeble lips could scarce give its wishes utterance, and the fatal blow has been struck in the midst of a last farewell on earth.

Arguments for the soul's independence of the body, from such facts, have been endeavoured to be controverted by a specious but unfounded assumption, that in those cases of disease which preyed upon the body without affecting the mind until death destroyed its means of communicating with the external world,—the brain continued sound and healthy, or at least comparatively so ;—that in cases where the limbs died first, the brain continued to live as long as the person spoke, and that even the whole of the limbs might be amputated without the mind suffering in the least, which certainly in so far is true, and in some instances this reasoning may hold good, the brain remaining sound, but it cannot be so in all. So learned a physiologist as Dr. Elliotson, insists that such arguments for the immortality of the soul and continued consciousness are “ perfectly groundless, for any function will remain vigorous to the last, if the organ which performs it is not the seat of the disease, nor much connected by sympathy, or in other modes with the organ which is the seat of the disease :—the stomach often calls regularly for food, and digests it vigorously, while the lungs are almost completely consumed by ulceration.”\* But even facts contradict the inference Dr. E. here attempts to draw.

When the stomach is injured or diseased, its digestive faculties are impaired ; when the lungs are affected in their structure, the breathing is impeded, and in the same way when any bodily organ is out of order, its functions are also deranged. Now, if the mind is merely a function of the brain, disease in this part ought always to have a proportionate effect on the phenomena of mind, but it is not so. True,

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\* See Dr. Elliotson's Notes to his translation of Blumenbach's Physiology.



injuries to the brain often affect the mind, and have deranged it in a great degree ; but this ought to follow as a necessary consequence in *every* case, if the mind directly depended on the brain as much as the digestion does on the stomach, and the breathing does on the lungs. If the mind is actually inherent in the substance of the brain, then if a part of the latter be abstracted, a part of the mind must of course be lost also, but which no materialist has been bold enough to affirm, because facts would immediately contradict him. Dr. Abercrombie\* cites various cases which illustrate this very strikingly, particularly that of a lady in whom one half of the brain was reduced to a mass of disease ; but who retained all her faculties to the last, (except that there was an imperfection of vision,†) and had been enjoying herself at a convivial party a few hours before her death. If we would believe the assertions of phrenologists, this case perhaps might be explained to the satisfaction of the materialist and consistent with his theory, for they insist that the mental faculties are *double*, and that the head is divided into two, containing a double set of organs for the same faculties, and that consequently even if one half of the brain be destroyed, the other could carry on the operations of the mind in the same manner as we have two eyes and two ears. They would have to show, however, that one complete side or set of organs had in the above case continued sound, and that the disease lay entirely in the other, which, from Dr. A.'s description, would not appear to have been the case with the accuracy of division necessary. Dr. Paris relates a very interesting case of a gentleman of great mental powers, who was severely afflicted with headaches, and a complication of disorders, but who retained all his mental powers. His complaints reduced his bodily frame exceedingly, and he sunk under them. On dissection, the whole substance of the brain was found perfectly blanched, and although its structure was uninjured, yet from its deficiency

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\* *Inquiries concerning the Intellectual Powers, &c.* Edinburgh, 1831.

† This may have been occasioned by disease affecting the optic nerves.

of blood it was evident that its action could not have been healthy and vigorous.\* A man mentioned by Dr. Ferriar, who died of an affection of the brain, retained all his faculties entire till the very moment of his death, which was sudden: on examining his head, the whole right hemisphere, that is, one half his brain, was found destroyed by suppuration. In a similar case recorded by Diemerbroek, half a pound of matter was found in the brain; and in one by Dr. Heberden, there was half a pound of water. A man, mentioned by Mr. O'Halloran, suffered such an injury of the head, that a large portion of the bone was removed, and during seventeen days, nearly one half of the brain was thrown out: yet the man retained all his intellectual faculties to the very moment of dissolution; and through the whole course of the disease, his mind maintained uniform tranquillity. Mr. Marshall records an important case of a man who died with a pound of water in his brain after having been long in a state of idiotcy, but who a very short while before his death became perfectly rational.

When in that dreadful stage of cholera called collapse, during which the principal organs of animal life seem to be struck with a deadly chill—when the heart has no power to send the blood into the extremities, and this fluid resembles tar—when the breath feels as cold as if it had come over a tract of snow, and the strength of the limbs is gone—when the voice can scarce rise into a whisper, the mind can continue its vigour to the last.—“During the whole of this period,” says Dr. Abercrombie, “the mind in general remains entirely unimpaired.”† Another able medical writer of great experience in this mysteriously spreading disease adds his testimony to the same effect. “While every thing indicates corporeal prostration, the intellectual faculties remain undisturbed, and the victim seems endued with a fearful consciousness of his situation.”‡ Can any one believe that in

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\* See Dr. Paris' Treatise on Diet. Appendix.

† Suggestions regarding Malignant Cholera, by J. Abercrombie, M. D. page 6.

‡ Practical Observations on the same, by D. M. Moir, Surgeon.

the above circumstances the mind loses not its powers because the brain may retain its physical and healthy soundness?—Impossible;—the brain cannot remain so, but must suffer in proportion to the rest of the corporeal frame, depending as it does (in common with every other organ and function of the body) on a proper supply of blood from the heart.

The mind may not be able to act with its usual vigour and soundness, when the organ or engine, by which when in the body it communicates with the external system of things, is deranged from that unknown state necessary for its proper performance, but this does not certainly indicate that *the substance of the brain itself* is actually endowed with a power to think or to will, more than a stick in the hand is endowed with a power to give a blow: the stick may be dropt, and the hand yet retain the power to inflict the blow, if it got back the stick; and so may the power of the mind remain the same, though without the ability to show it. We may have seen the hand and the stick separated, and have been sensible that the hand retained its power, if excited by *the will*: we have not seen the soul and the brain separated, so that we could examine the soul in that state, but if we have strong reasons for believing they are capable of such separation, we must not reject it on this account, for reasons already given.

Such cases as those now cited with regard to the brain, in the opinion of Dr. Abercrombie, (and I think every impartial person must agree with him,) “give no countenance to the doctrine of materialism, which some have presumptuously deduced from a very partial view of the influence of cerebral disease upon the manifestation of mind. They show us indeed,\* in a very striking manner, the mind holding intercourse with the external world, through the medium of the brain and nervous system, and, by certain diseases of these organs, they show us this intercourse impaired or sus-

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\* Dr. A. here alludes also to many very important and curious cases given by him, besides those here mentioned.

pended ; but they show nothing more. In particular, they warrant nothing in any degree analogous to those partial deductions which form the basis of materialism. On the contrary, they show us the brain injured and diseased to an extraordinary extent, without the mental functions being affected in any sensible degree. They show us, farther, the manifestations of mind obscured for a time, and yet their reviving in all their original vigour, almost at the very moment of dissolution. Finally, they exhibit to us the mind, cut off from all intercourse with the external world, recalling its old impressions, even of things long forgotten ; and exercising its powers on those which had long ceased to exist, in a manner totally irreconcilable with any idea we can form of a material function."

From our finding that the dissolution of matter in which living beings were most nearly interested, is not their destruction,—it shows demonstrably, that there is no ground to think that the dissolution of any other matter, or destruction of any other organs and instruments will be the destruction or dissolution of living agents from the like kind of relation. And we have no reason to think that we stand in any other kind of relation to any thing which we find dissolved by death.

Every part of the human body is in a constant state of change. Its very outward appearance alters so much that the intimate friend who has been absent a number of years, particularly in warm climates, may be so changed that we may be able to trace but slight resemblance to his former self—yet he is still called the same man. How different are we in appearance during childhood and in manhood ? yet we reckon ourselves the same. Why ?—not because we have the same person, but because our souls have undergone no such alteration. A man feels that the being called *himself* remains essentially the same. "In particular," says Dr. Abercrombie, "his remembrance of the occurrences of his early days he feels to be totally inconsistent with the idea of an impression made upon a material organ, except he has recourse to the absurdity of supposing that *one series*

*of particles, as they departed, transferred the picture to those which came to occupy their room."* This argument, for the distinct and separate nature of the soul from the matter of the body, merits particular attention.

The most eminent anatomists join in affirming the perpetual waste and renewal of every part of the human body, so that in the course of an ordinary life, a man may have a number of different bodies, not one particle of the one being the same as contributed to the formation of the other. "During this unceasing change," as Dr. Crombie notices, "every individual is conscious of continuing the same being." How can this continual change, he asks, be reconciled to the conviction of personal identity, on the hypothesis, that the brain is the thinking, conscious being? Can identity consist with perpetual change?—He refers to the opinion of the celebrated surgeon, Mr. Charles Bell, who gives it as a fact incontestibly established, that in the course of a long life, every part of our bodies is changed several hundred times! \* Suppose, however, that a man at the age of seventy has had a completely renewed body only once every seven years of his life. He will at that age have lost nine bodies in a gradual and imperceptible manner, still considering himself all along as the same man; the body he then has, we shall further suppose, suddenly dies and moulders away before our eyes. Would this be a proof to us that the soul which had survived the loss of nine bodies should cease to exist, because it had lost a tenth, and so could not longer communicate with the world?—surely not.

The intimate sympathy which exists between the soul and body, (the understanding and memory, for example, being at times influenced by the disposition of the body, so as often in old age to decline along with it,) has been made an objection to the immaterialism of the soul,† or of its being of a

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\* See Library of Useful Knowledge, No. IX. known to be the production of Mr. Bell.

† In making use of the term *immateriality* as applied to the soul, I beg it may be borne in mind, that no more is implied than that the soul is not merely a quality or property of the visible matter of the body, and is of a

distinct nature. The utmost, however, that this proves is, that there is an intimate union between them which is the cause of the sympathy; and if there be such an union, it is natural to imagine that there would exist a sympathy between them, that the body should be affected with the delights and disturbances of the mind, and that the soul should also take part in the pleasures and pains of the body, when the sensation is brought by the nerves to the sensorium.

\* The soul may have no other means of communicating with the world here around it, but by the living animal frame, which it inhabits, yet to infer decidedly that it cannot exist as a sentient being without its being attached to the brain, is going beyond what the utmost researches of science can with truth support. "There is nothing repugnant to reason," observes Dr. Crombie, "in the supposition, that, being disengaged at death from its dependence on organic aid, the soul may be capable of exercising its powers by properties of its own, either innate, or communicated by the Author of its being. As the images remain after the visual organ is destroyed, so the ideas, sentiments, and affections may continue to be, after the medium of their production has been dissolved. But whatever may be the mode of its future existence, and agency, whether any organic structure be, or be not necessary to its operations, if we have every reason to believe that not a single atom of our corporeal frame shall perish, we have surely still stronger ground for presumption, that the immaterial substance, *that which truly* constitutes the man, the body being merely its instrument, will never die."\*

Death does not *annihilate* the materials of which the body is formed, for it can be demonstrated that not a particle of it ceases to exist: *the arrangement* merely is altered. We have, in fact, no conception of annihilation from experience

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perfectly distinct nature from the body, although intimately connected with it during the life of the latter; not that the soul is absolutely nothing, as so much empty space, for it may have a vehicle of a kind we know not of, which all must at least admit the possibility of being the case.

\* Natural Theology.

of its effects. Matter may change its appearance, its consistence, and the distribution of its parts, but none of it is lost. If the soul then is distinct from any result of bodily organization, we have no reason to suppose it will be affected by any change in the arrangement of material organs, *excepting in so far as relates to its intercourse with the external world.*

"Indeed, the soul in human nature seems to be all in all. Its various states of changeful feelings direct all the body's motions and affections. It is the soul that makes the body what it is; and in a future state of existence, the same soul will still make the same individual being, of whatever component parts its body may be composed."\*

"It is not the exterior garb, (to use the words of Dr. Crombie) *but the internal sense*, which constitutes the same individual thinking being."†

"This frame, compacted with transcendent skill,  
Of moving joints obedient to my will;  
Nurs'd from the fruitful glebe, like yonder tree,  
Waxes and wastes—I call it *mine*, NOT ME.  
New matter still the mouldering mass sustains,  
The mansion chang'd—the tenant still remains."‡

The soul or mind of man is not the *life* of the body,—the animating principle of it, or its animal life. Life must be something quite distinct. All the inferior creation of living creatures have an animal life, yet we have no sure reason to believe that they have immortal souls, or any thing of a similar nature which will survive their bodies. We know, however, nothing on the subject for certain; and there may, for any thing we can tell to the contrary, be as great a variety of spiritual natures as there are material and visible ones, and, as the stars are without number, so may be the mansions of a future state of existence, all adapted to the various tenants intended for them. Many animals have a

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\* On the separate existence of the Soul, by James Hogg, "*the Ettrick Shepherd.*" See Fraser's Magazine for December, 1831.

† Natural Theology, Vol. II. p. 476.

‡ Arbuthnot.

principle within them which thinks, remembers, shows cunning, fear, love, friendship, hatred, and sorrow. We have even reason to believe that some animals, as dogs, for instance, can *dream*; so we are not entitled decidedly to pronounce that they shall not in some manner survive death, although their destination may probably be different from ours, and Scripture gives us no clear information on this point. They were all present in the earthly paradise of our first parents, where God and his holy angels kept up a visible communication with man when he was pure and perfect, and many pious and learned men have imagined heaven to be some such material place, in opposition to the wild and extravagant ideas which some enthusiasts have of it, without any real grounds from Revelation. I have alluded so far to the inferior animals here, and in some other places, merely because there are some reasoners who assume the fact of their total annihilation or extinction, in order to refute several natural arguments which tend to establish the immortality of man.

To return : Life must be of a powerful, active, and subtle nature, capable of pervading all parts of the body with the quickness of thought : it carries on all the various chemical changes which are constantly in operation ; it contracts the muscles, causing the heart to send the blood through the whole machine, and the lungs to inhale the air which is so necessary for our existence : it prevents putrefaction, which begins whenever life has wholly fled. The last act of life is the rendering of the muscles rigid, and when they relax, the body becomes perfectly flexible and the work of decomposition begins. The body is not in the common state of inanimate matter as long as rigidity continues, nor subject to the process of decomposition, by which dead animal and vegetable matter hastens to mix itself again with the earth. Life seems sometimes to quit the body slowly ; at other times, in an instant, as when struck by lightning, when no rigidity takes place and putrefaction instantly commences. The involuntary motions, such as those of the heart and the lungs, are not subject to the will, and are



kept up without it : yet these require a constant power to retain them in motion, which ceases not in some degree for a moment, without death ensuing. The movements which are caused by the will, follow its indications with amazing rapidity, and beyond what we are conscious of exerting. When we wish to move a finger, we see the effect of volition on it by its being moved as we choose it to be, but in performing rapid music, or writing a single line quickly—how inconceivably fast must the communication pass along the nerves ! The fingers could not *of themselves* spell a word, or know which note is to follow another, but the directions to do all this must be conveyed to them, and this often without our thinking particularly on the spelling of each word, or of the exact order of musical notes, but yet we are conscious that it is the will, proceeding from the mind which causes these effects. We have no consciousness of causing the contraction and dilation of the heart, which therefore we may believe not to be kept up by the spirit of a man. There is another power within him besides his soul, and this is his *mortal life*, by which perhaps the soul is enabled to act upon the body. Even if this was ascertained to be the case, and we had a true knowledge of the nature of animal life, still, how the soul and the life are connected, and how the one can influence the other, would remain nearly as great a mystery as ever.

Philosophers have in fact discovered a subtle fluid pervading the body, invisible while in it, but capable of being rendered visible both on entering or leaving it, and able to perform all the phenomena of animal life. Life in the body is seen instantly to expire on the total abstraction of this mysterious fluid ; there is therefore an evident connexion between it and the life which animates us, and physiologists have traced many other points of identity. It is certain and undeniable, that during life, *electricity* pervades all animal bodies, and after death that it does not ; nay, that then it cannot be made to enter them : that is, after it has once entirely left them. In the language of electricians, the body is a *conductor* of electricity during its life, and when dead is

not so. Electricity can produce all the usual effects caused by a living principle in the body; and as on its absence they all cease, there cannot be a doubt that it acts a most important part where it is placed, for Nature does nothing in vain: its presence prevents putrefaction,—so does life;—when electricity is suddenly and wholly given out of the body, (as by a flash of lightning) putrefaction immediately begins:—the presence of electricity when proceeding by what are called the eighth pair of nerves from the brain to the stomach, can keep up digestion in this natural laboratory, as has been proved experimentally in a decisive and curious manner by Dr. Wilson Phillip. In a living animal when one of these nerves was severed, digestion was greatly impaired, and when both were divided, it entirely ceased. By keeping up a galvanic action along these nerves, this power went on in the stomach, but whenever the galvanism was withdrawn, the digestion ceased.\* But this discussion would lead me too far, if pursued, and I shall only add, that in the opinion of some of the very ablest men,† (who have investigated the various phenomena connected with the human frame, with the deepest knowledge and most persevering assiduity,) *lightning or electricity* is the life of the body, but that the *mind* is of a distinct and separate nature, not essentially or necessarily dependent on the life, or on the formation of the clay. This belief is founded on many experiments and observations which go far to establish it as a fact, but it is not pretended by any one to be *demonstrably* so, or established beyond a question, however *probable* it may have been rendered.‡

The above theory is so bold an idea, that I am not surprised at its being ridiculed by those, who, perhaps, could

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\* Lightning, electricity, galvanism, and magnetism have been all proved to be modifications of the same fluid.

† I allude here more particularly to the celebrated John Hunter, and to his long well-known and eminent pupil, John Abernethy, lately deceased.

‡ —“The electric fluid, one of the prime agents in physical nature, and probably the great spring of vegetable and animal life.”—

Crombie's Natural Theology, Vol. II. p. 153.

not give a single good reason against its being true, beyond that it seems to them (without any investigation) to be very improbable, and because all the phenomena of life cannot as yet be explained by it, and most likely never shall be so in this world ; as, for instance, how the will can influence it, by causing it to contract the muscles, (but we see that electricity *can* do so,) or how the involuntary actions and processes in the body are induced so as to keep up life.

For a little while after death, no perceptible alteration takes place in the organization of the body :—

“ Before decay’s effacing fingers  
Have swept the lines where beauty lingers.”

And it not unfrequently happens, that no *post mortem* examination, not even a microscopic inspection, could show what change has taken place in the frame which should necessarily have occasioned death. Life is therefore not dependent on any particular conformation of matter, but is something *added to it*, and which can be taken away without occasioning, for a while, any change in its organic structure, leaving it, however, in the same state and subject to the same laws as all inanimate matter is more or less governed by ; liable for one thing to decomposition.

If life, then, is distinct from matter, and is not a mere quality of it, but of an entirely different nature, we may use it as one argument why the soul may be so also, and that the latter may continue to subsist in life and consciousness when the body has returned to the dust. Man may therefore be said to be compounded of THREE distinct, yet united parts, all of different natures :—the inanimate or insensible *clay*, which is brought into action by the *animal life*, and governed by the *soul*. *Tria juncta in uno*. One other union is, without doubt, greatly more mysterious ; but, since such is the threefold constitution of man, why should we ever doubt or call in question the existence of a Trinity of Persons in the one Godhead ?

The three parts now explained, as forming the Being called *man*, are neither of them in strict language while separate to be so denominated. The dead *body*, (which is no better than a lump of clay,) is not *man*, for the principal part has left it, and the *soul* itself is not *man*, but what we understand by a *spirit*. It is, however, as before observed, sufficiently accurate, while speaking of a deceased person, to allude only to his soul, and to refer to its condition, as that in which *he* is, for it has been said very justly, though it must not be taken *literally*, that *the soul of man is the man*, being the only part of him which thought, reasoned, and felt pleasure or pain, and is the same during life in the body and when separated from it.\*

This consideration is a very important one to be attended to in speaking of the dead generally, and its being overlooked leads to great confusion in our ideas of their condition; but most writers, as I have before remarked, when alluding to the state of the departed, refer indiscriminately to that of the body, or to that of the soul, just as it suits them at the time, and their true meaning is often impossible to be discovered.

The following remarks to the same purpose are taken from an excellent sermon by the Rev. George Garioch, minister of Meldrum:—"It is the doctrine both of reason and Scripture, that, in death, the soul is active and independent of the body. It is the doctrine of reason, for it informs us that those attributes and properties which are peculiar to mind and matter are essentially different and distinct. We are conscious of something within us which thinks, remembers, wills, to which we give the name of mind. Of the body, we can only say, that it has those properties which distinguish matter, and which are well known to us from the evidence of sense, viz. solidity, extension,

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\* "All the ideas and sensations of which any individual is conscious, are all considered by him as inhering in some being which he calls himself, his mind, or his soul. These facts are too evident either to admit or to require proof."

hardness, softness. Now, we have not the slightest reason to suppose that matter, which has these last properties, can have any of the attributes of mind, nor that the mind which thinks, can have any of the distinguishing qualities of matter. They are not subject, consequently, to the same laws. It would seem to follow, therefore, on principles of reason, that the change in the body, to which we give the name of death, does not necessarily imply the same change in the mind. To that matter of which the bodies of men consist, and the component parts of which have been ascertained by analysis, there is added *a principle of organic life*. But as this principle is common both to men and to the lower animals, and belongs to matter in certain states of composition, the loss of it can have no influence upon the mind, of which it forms no part. Soon after death a change takes place in the combination of the component parts of the body—that change to which matter of all kinds is subject. The body is resolved, by the process of decomposition, into its primary elements; the matter of which it consists is changed, but it is not annihilated.—All this is a sufficient explanation of the appearances which present themselves upon the death of the body, and accounts for it no longer possessing those powers which denote in it the continuance of life. But it is no proof whatever that life has also fled from the spirit of man; since, as we have already said, it is not subject to those laws by which matter is governed. It is the nature of body that its component parts are liable to decomposition, and we have no reason to suppose that mind consists of separate parts, or that it is subject to any change resulting from such a structure, which could be capable of affecting its condition. It by no means, therefore, follows, that the dissolution of the body is accompanied by the death of the soul; the latter may continue in the exercise of all its powers, independent of the change to which the former is necessarily subject. This is the great doctrine of the soul's immateriality, and consequent immortality, which reason itself so powerfully teaches. As far as its testimony, therefore, is entitled to any weight, it goes to show that sleep is both a correct

and pleasing emblem of death, since, in both, *the soul continues in a state of vigour and activity at the time when the body is at rest.*" \*

consideration of the powers of the soul in *dreaming*, while the bodily organs of sensation have ceased to act, will also tend to show a distinct and separate nature between them. The body sinks down from fatigue,—is overpowered by sleep and loses its waking senses for a time: Its eyes see not, its ears hear not, and its limbs are usually powerless. At such times, however, the soul is often most active; its memory, imagination, and other faculties are more alive, and it seems to live in an aerial world of its own creation.

"The spirit knows no gross impediments  
In dreams; but like a thing aerial  
She sinks, and soars, and glides, and floats away  
Delighted,"—

The more we investigate the various wonderful phenomena of dreaming, the more decided appears the distinction between soul and body, and separate nature of these two. In sleep we sometimes see the perfect representation of those we know, who are alive, even those at a distance, and those who have been long since dead, as well as faces and persons which, to the best of our remembrance, we never beheld when awake, or even had an idea of before. We then seem to see places and scenes, and as it were, to hear much, which we can afterwards remember with the greatest distinctness. Whether the soul is really capable of seeing and hearing without the assistance of the eyes or ears, while the body is alive, or whether it be supposed merely to *imagine* in sleep that it does so, both are equally mysterious. We read of God having frequently spoken and represented things to the souls of men in visions when their eyes were closed and their ears deaf to all external impressions, and such communications

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\* Sermons on various subjects of Christian doctrine and practice. 1831.

† *Unimorc*, by Professor Wilson of Edinburgh.

certainly may not have reached the mind by the organs of its earthly body. Now we know assuredly that these dreams were not the mere *imaginations* of the soul itself, or any efforts of its own, but communications and representations made to it. Job informs us that "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men,—then God openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction."\* That is to say, he communicates to their spirits in a supernatural manner; probably without having recourse to the bodily organs at all as *the media* of communication.

"The Word of the Lord" (Christ) "came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me," &c.† The context plainly shows that it was our Lord himself who spoke to the patriarch, and God on such occasions, often appeared of old under some visible form, ~~and~~ he was probably seen by Abram as well as heard at this time. The reply of Abram seems also to have been in his sleep, for it is all included under the designation of a vision, and most of us have been sensible of having in dreams heard words spoken, and of having replied to them.

"It is delightful to be able," says the Editor of the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*,‡ "to see with the eyes of our soul (for certes in sleep it cannot be with the eyes of our body, considering that they are shut at the time) a thousand immaterial shapes and prospects which no waking eye ever beheld, yet with which we hold communication as if suddenly carried into a new state of existence."

During sleep, the intercourse of the mind and body is generally suspended, and therefore it is the most favourable time, for observing (if I may use the expression) their independence on each other. We find that often when the bodily frame is most fatigued and in the soundest sleep, the soul is most active, and indeed, may *always* be active during sleep, although we often do not remember on awaking that our thoughts had been employed at all, and it is the opinion of

many who have studied the nature of dreaming, that the dreams of imperfect sleep are best remembered, while those of profound sleep are generally forgotten, or perhaps never recollected at all, although they may have manifested themselves to others by the actions of the sleeper.

We are too apt to believe that the soul cannot have been active during sleep unless we *remember* it to have been so; but a moment's reflection will convince us we could not depend on a more fallacious test. A person has not the least recollection in the morning of having dreamt, and consequently says that his soul must have been insensibly asleep, yet others may have seen him smiling, speaking, laughing, and even walking in his sleep; he himself also may afterwards have his dreams brought to his perfect remembrance by some occurrence when he is awake.

Dr. Smellie mentions of Dr. Blacklock, (who lost his sight at the age of a few months, and consequently when grown up had totally forgotten the nature of this faculty,) that in his dreams, he had a distinct impression of a sense which he did not possess when awake. He described his impression by saying, that, when awake, there were three ways by which he could distinguish persons, namely by hearing them speak, by feeling the head and shoulders, and by attending to the sound and manner of their breathing. In his dreams, however, he had a vivid impression of objects, in a manner distinct from any of these modes. He imagined that he was united to them, by a kind of distant contact, which was effected by threads or strings passing from their bodies to his own. When blind people are enabled to see for the first time by any surgical operation, they think every thing which they observe, touches their eyes, and have no idea of distance or the sizes of the objects which they perceive. If they are made sensible that an object is at a distance from them, then their notion would probably be precisely that of Dr. Blacklock,—that there was some sort of connexion between it and their eyes, beyond the mere sensation of its image in the eye itself.

Whether the soul can actually leave the body and return



to it while it is under the influence of deep sleep or a trance, we have no sure grounds to decide upon, although some of the most celebrated Biblical critics and divines lay down that it can, from the passage in which they believe St. Paul expresses a doubt whether his spirit saw a certain vision while it was in his body, *as usual*, or out of his body. I say, "*believe*," because it does not appear clear to me that St. Paul in the passage alluded to means *himself*, and I am rather inclined to understand from it (contrary to the opinions of all commentators whom I have consulted\*) that the Apostle *alludes to some other person*, and certainly if he refers to himself, he uses a quaintness of expression of which no other example can be given where he speaks of his own actions. When he describes his own conversion, for instance, his language is direct, and he uses the first person. "And it came to pass that as *I* made *my* journey, *I* fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto *me*,"—"and *I* answered," &c.† The other text I refer to, the Apostle introduces by saying, "*I* will come to visions and revelations of the Lord,"—but he does not tell us that these were made to *himself*, as far as I can see. He goes on—"I knew a man above fourteen years ago." How does this show that he means *himself*? He merely *knew* some one, years ago,—was acquainted with him. How strange a mode of expression, if he wished his auditors to understand that it was himself he was speaking of. ("Whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth.") To this parenthesis the commentaries on the passage chiefly relate, and if St. Paul really meant *himself*, it does seem plain that he was uncertain whether his soul had been caught up while it was in his body (and consequently his body along with it), or when taken out of his body by itself.

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\* It may be observed, at the same time, that none of them attempt to *argue* the point, or think it necessary to prove it, but all seem to take it for granted, as if the words themselves were too clear to admit of dispute, which, in my view of them, is far from being the case, or that it is most obvious from them that the apostle speaks of himself, although, perhaps, commentators may be able to show they are right.

† Acts xxii. 6.

"*Such a one* caught up to the third heaven,"—this does not appear to be the language by which he would describe himself, but *some other person*.

If the Apostle did mean *another*, the part where the difficulty lies might be rendered very distinct by a simple and natural interpretation of the original, as in the following paraphrase of it.—I knew a man more than fourteen years ago, who was a follower of Christ, (but whether in his body, or out of his body,—that is, whether his soul is departed,—*whether he is now alive or dead*, God knows, I do not.) "*Such a one*," (which is a common mode of expression when *another* person is spoken of, but not named) was carried up to the third heaven, and he repeats, "I knew such a man, how *he* was caught up." "*Of such a one* will I glory; yet of *myself*, I will not glory." Making here an evident distinction between *two persons*, and as much as to say, he was one I am proud of, or boast of, as being a fellow-christian, —one perhaps converted by the Apostle himself, a considerable time before; one at least particularly distinguished by God as described. If any other person had had such a vision, or whatever it was, he would naturally have communicated it to all his brethren in Christ, particularly to so very active and ardent a promoter of the good cause as St. Paul, who could hardly have failed to give an account of so extraordinary an event.

Now, where is the plain intimation that St. Paul alludes to himself, and what reason can there be for his not speaking in the first person, as he does in other places, if he relates the vision, or trance, or actual flight to paradise and heaven of himself, or of his own soul? I am far from wishing to put any forced or mere ingenious construction on the words to suit any particular theory;—on the contrary, my endeavour is to draw the most natural and direct sense from them, and it would tend more to confirm the proposition which I wish to prove (or that the soul and body are so distinct, as that the former can exist in consciousness without the latter) if the exposition and understanding of the passage were as other commentators on it have united to maintain.

St. Paul himself had many extraordinary revelations, but it does not therefore follow, that when in the 7th verse of the same chapter, he glories in such communications, that he also meant *all* of them he alluded to, had been personally made to him directly from God ; especially, too, when from the manner he had just been speaking, the natural meaning of his words would lead us to think he had been referring to some one else regarding the two last mentioned. He might even glory or be delighted at hearing of those made to others, in which not only he, but all Christians are concerned. *We* also may glory in the revelations which St. Paul received and speaks of, because they disclose to us such bright prospects for the future,—but I offer these suggestions with great diffidence in the face of such contrary opinions, and merely for the consideration of my readers; as a more easy solution of the difficulties found by theological commentators in this passage.

If the common interpretation and understanding is followed, the possibility and actual fact of the soul being capable of leaving the body during sleep, or in a trance, without death ensuing in consequence, and its returning again, is established on Scriptural authority,—or that the Apostle here thought it might be the case at a particular time, and reason can find, at least, no impossibility in it, from the soul not being the life of the body.

In whatever way any one may incline to decide on the sense of the text, this Apostle's opinion is very plain from several *other* passages, that the soul and body are so distinct from each other, that the former can live and act when out of the latter, owing to death rendering the body but a portion of earth, hastening or already returned to mix with its kindred dust, which has not the effect of lulling the soul asleep, so as to be deprived of its consciousness in that state, or any of its perceptions, because it can no longer make use of its bodily organs, as if thought and perception were mere qualities of the brain.

The state of dreaming, mysterious and inexplicable as it is, does, however, of itself show that the soul, even while in the body, is at times independent of the corporeal organs of perception, although it may not be altogether ever free during mortal life from being in some degree influenced by the particular state or condition which the body may be in at the time.

The soul requires not the eyes to see,  
For it gazes bright in the darkest night;  
And seems in sleep to roam wildly free,  
Grave Reason controlling not then its flight.

The soul requires not the ears to hear,  
When list'ning to many a wond'rous tale;  
And glides, perhaps, from its dwelling clear,  
Its strength ne'er seeming to flag or to fail!

The soul requires not the tongue to speak  
To shades whom it meets in its airy way:  
But the waking memory oft proves weak  
To remember these dreaming words by day.

Unearthly are oft the scenes it can see;  
Yet wonders at nought in its mystic clime,  
Nor thinks it strange though its converse be  
With those who have died in the olden time!

But well it knows, when the eyes unclose,  
It must aye be in the secret cell,  
Where heaven has doomed it shall feel the woes,  
Which torment us ever since first we fell.

Yet soon shall the fetter'd spirit rise,  
And leave for ever all mortal pain,  
To rest unseen by all earthly eyes,  
'Till a body shall rise to rejoin it again.

From what has now been said, and from many facts and observations which have been adduced by different authors, it may be fairly inferred:—

1st, That the mind or soul is not an inherent quality of

the brain, although it receives outward impressions by means of this organ, (which communicates with all the other bodily organs of sense by *the nerves*) and, on which the soul more immediately acts to direct the movements of the body while life maintains a very intimate union between them.

2d, That the soul is not at least of a nature which must necessarily perish like the body, or become torpid without sense when the brain dies, but has been constituted immortal,—that is, capable of continued consciousness, by the will of its Creator.

3d, That the soul is not mere empty space, but is a substance of its own kind ; differing entirely from our common ideas of matter, in the same way as lightning, magnetism, &c. are of a distinct nature from all other matter, and cannot be called *material* in the common sense in which we use this word ;—the soul being able to pervade the brain as the magnetic power does iron, or as the electrical influence does the whole of animal bodies, and many other substances ; being able to come out of our mortal frames at the divine command ; still continuing a conscious individual soul.

## CHAPTER IV.

The alleged sleep, or unconscious torpor of the soul between death and the resurrection on the last day.

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“ And shall the soul, the fount of reason die,  
When dust and darkness round its temple lie ?  
Did God breathe in it no ethereal fire,  
Dimless and quenchless though the breath expire ? ”

MONTGOMERY.

“ Insensibility is no more part of spiritual, than annihilation is of corporeal death.” \*

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THIS has long been a celebrated controversy, and is still an unsettled point in the opinion of many ; but the advocates of the soul's torpidity seem to me to be more anxious to prove their own theory, than to take an impartial view of the question, or fairly to consider whatever seems against their doctrine. As our belief of the present state of departed souls, and of that, of course, which our own shall soon experience, rests on how this inquiry is decided, I am induced to enter upon it at more length than in a former chapter, for it well merits a separate and more particular investigation, while every argument of importance on both sides ought to be noticed.

The indifference which most people show as to the man-

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\* The Scripture doctrine of the state of the departed both before and after the resurrection, by J. Peers, A. M. 1831.

ner in which their souls shall pass that space of time between their deaths and the last day, has often struck me as exceedingly remarkable. The point to be ascertained is—whether we are to have a *continued* conscious existence, or to experience a blank in it for an unknown length of time, during which our souls shall be insensible of life, or thought, or feeling of any kind. The slumber which is supposed to come over the body and mental faculties at death, is often thought to exercise equal power over both :—

“The sleep of death—that awful sleep,  
 Alas !—too motionless, and deep  
 At sound, or sight, or touch to wake,  
 Save when the last loud thunders shake  
 The heavens, and elemental war  
 Summons the dead to God’s high bar.”\*

Surely it is strange that any should not care which way the disembodied state shall be passed by the soul. Those persons to whom I allude, admit that this period may be some thousand years, but still they affirm it to be all one whether they are asleep or awake—unconscious and torpid, happy or miserable ! By a state of *sleep*, they understand one of total insensibility,—one in which the soul shall know nothing, or feel not its own existence,—which is *an addition* to that state when it is in the body, and for which they have no authority that will bear candid examination. It seems always a matter of little moment to their present feelings, whether or not their departed relatives, or their late dearest friends are now sensible or senseless in spirit—thinking on them—expecting their arrival into a state where they will be capable of thought and feeling :—whether they are in a middle state, or in an eternal one ; whether their final doom is pronounced and carried into execution, or is not as yet communicated to them :—whether we take pains to understand many passages in Scripture ;—whether we explain them so as to contradict each other, or confuse and confound all those I allude to, or be able to render them all consistent :—and,

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\* *De Rancè*, a Poem.

lastly, whether the avowed belief of all Christian Churches (and Heathen ones also) in the continued consciousness of the soul after death, is true ; or whether some learned divines, and many philosophic laymen have proved them all wrong ; or if others have established that we cannot be sure whether they are right or not !

Is all this agreeable to reason and common sense ? Is it a subject on which we ourselves are not individually interested ? If a man were asked whether he considered it of consequence to know if he was for the next year or ten years of his life on earth, to spend the time in a state of perfect consciousness, or in sleep uncheered even by a single fancy of the soul, or in the most vivid and delightful dreams, and ideal intercourse with others, (even admitting that the time passed unconsciously should appear the same as if it had been employed in dreams, and both seem but a short while on awakening)—would he be careless which of these states he entered into ? or think it the same thing to him when he lay down at night in his bed, whether his sleep was to last a few hours, or for years ? But the question now proposed is of infinitely more importance :—it is—shall the disembodied soul give up its faculties of thought, perception, memory, affection, hope, fear, and all its other powers, or retain them for a certain, but to us indefinite duration, say at the shortest probable time, for several hundred years. It is not whether the soul is to dream or to fancy in its sleep, but whether it shall actually behold real and awful scenes, hear, see, and understand what is passing around it,—retain its reason, and be as truly sensible of its existence as ever. Let those who are resolved to maintain this carelessness as to a considerable portion of their own future existence and fate ; or who care not, or think not of those departed who were beloved by them while on earth,—here close the book, since it interests them not : but they who feel and think differently, should give this chapter their most serious attention, and I do not fear their considering the time so occupied as unprofitably spent. The man who thinks he shall live many years, may imagine every thing relative to a future



state premature to be thought on; but few will be able to persuade him who finds that he has reason to expect death ere long, that it will be all one whether he shall soon enter on a long unconscious sleep, or *immediately* after this life meet his deceased friends, awake to mental happiness or woe.

“The question, whether the disembodied soul exists in a state of consciousness, or insensibility, cannot be considered as a subject of useless speculation. It may indeed be but remotely connected with any great moral or practical results; but it bears directly upon points which touch the best feelings of our nature, which involve the satisfaction and repose of our own personal anticipations, and which limit or increase the sources from which the Christian mourner may derive an immediate consolation. I do not mean to say that, should our spirits be destined to pass an indefinite number of years in lone forgetfulness, the mind of every believer must be overwhelmed or dismayed at the knowledge of the fact. For a man who is ~~is~~ habitually familiar with abstract contemplations, may reflect with indifference upon the dreariness of an interval, which he knows will be annihilated to his perceptions. Such a man may train his imagination to discard all notion of the lapse of that time, which by him will be passed in unconsciousness. And he may bring himself to identify the moment of his death with that of his resurrection. But it will not be denied that to arrive at such a view as this, implies an effort beyond the ordinary operations of our minds. With the mass of mankind the imagination and the feelings will naturally teach the spirit, which is longing after life and immortality, to shrink from the prospect of such a period of absolute insensibility as almost assumes the character of annihilation. And the commonest experience will convince us, that, to the wounded feelings of those who mourn the dead, no thought is more genial, none comes with more of healing on its wings, than that which whispers that the departed spirit *even now*, conscious and thinking, rejoices in its freedom from

the weight of mortality. If then there be warrant of Scripture for this hope, it is no waste of time to vindicate it.”\*

“So corrupt,” says Dr. Watts, “are the inclinations of men, and their passions so much impressed and moved by things present or just at hand, that future joys and sorrows when set far beyond death and the grave, at some vast and unknown distance of time, have but little influence on their hearts and lives.”

I have been assured by a Reverend friend, that he had frequently found criminals under sentence of death, who were but little afraid of punishment in a future state, either in spirit or in body, and this in consequence of believing, in the first place, that their souls could not exist in consciousness in a separate state, or until again united to a body, which they knew was not to happen till the last day, and therefore, that if they were subjected to any retribution, it must be after the resurrection and judgment (which it is undeniable, may be at a very great distance :) until which time they would be in no state capable of feeling remorse or contrition of any kind for their crimes ; all men, in their ideas, being to remain perfectly insensible after death till then, when there would be an end of the present order of all sub-lunary things as described in Scripture. In this opinion they are joined even by some learned and pious Christian divines and others, as already said, while there are very many who admit that they are quite at a loss what to think upon the subject of the insensible sleep of the soul, which death is believed by some to bring upon it. An indefinite number of years is much the same as *eternity* in the opinion of many, particularly of the lower orders, since the time is too long for them to look beyond ; though they themselves would not in such a state of insensibility be aware of its lapse, yet they know that the hours, days, and years of time must pass till the end of it, and take as long to do so

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\* Considerations on the condition of the soul in the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, by the Rev. F. Ricketts. 1831.

as now. The great day of account may be near at hand, but it may be at a vast distance ; for, since the world has gone on so long, it may continue to do so for a very extended period, its duration being known only to One. The indefinite time of our Lord's second coming visibly to the earth, leads many of all ranks to think little of what may then happen. We are assured that in the last days there shall come scoffers, saying—"Where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning?" Dr. Watts remarks, that "though these solemn events are still as certain in themselves, yet being looked upon as things a great way off, they make too feeble an impression on the conscience, and their distance is much abused to give an indulgence to present sensualities." For this we have the authority of our Lord himself. "The evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken."\* And Solomon teaches us the same truth: "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."† And even the virtuous and pious may be too much allured to indulge sinful negligence, and yield to temptations too easily, when the terrors of another world are set so far off, and their hopes of happiness are delayed so long. It is granted, indeed, that this sort of reasoning is very wrong, but so foolish are our natures, that we are too ready to take up with it, and to grow remiss in preparing for another life.

Whereas, if it can be made to appear from the word of God, that, *at the moment of death*, the soul enters into a state according to its character and conduct here, and that the recompences of vice and virtue are in some measure to begin immediately upon the end of our state of trial; and, if besides all this, there be a glorious and a dreadful resurrection to be expected, with eternal pain or pleasure both for soul and body, then all these subterfuges are precluded, which mankind would form to themselves from an unknown dis-

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\* Matt. xxiv. 48, 49.

† Eccles. viii. 11.

tance of the day of recompence ; virtue will have a near and stronger guard placed about it, and piety will be attended with additional motives if its *initial rewards* are at hand, and shall commence as soon as this life expires ; the vicious will be more effectually frightened, if the hour of death must immediately consign them to a state of sorrows, bitter anguish of conscience without hope, with a fearful expectation of yet greater sorrows, and bodily joined to mental pain. Virtue, even in this world, is in so far its own reward, by the internal satisfaction which it gives, and vice is punished by the continual dread of detection and consequences of some kind resulting from it ; but all this cannot be said to be the punishment threatened by the Gospel or by the Law to vice, or the reward to virtue : A certain degree of happiness or misery, therefore, in the middle state, is nowise incompatible with no sentence having been yet pronounced, or this doom against sinners being unexecuted, that is, with the soul not having then entered into the great happiness of heaven or pains of hell.

How common is it to hear of such and such a number of souls *perishing*, and of those who are *no more*, when the *fact* only is, that their earthly tenements have been touched by death,—have fallen to the earth, and are of no more present use to the soul, which then must quit them ; *but only to go elsewhere*, not to lie down and die likewise, or to seek out some den to pass its season of torpidity, like a Greenland bear during a polar night in its icy cavern.

In Pope's celebrated "*Elegy on the death of an unfortunate Lady*," it is said—

So peaceful rests, without a stone, a name,  
 What *once* had beauty, titles, wealth, and fame ;  
 How lov'd and honour'd once, avails thee not,  
 To whom related, or by whom begot ;  
*A heap of dust alone remains of thee,*  
*'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be !*

If the soul of this lamented lady *retains* its life and feeling, and is joyful in the society of her relations, how can it be said that nothing but dust remains of her ? and her soul

*must* feel consciousness, retaining memory ; else as a separate soul, it must be said to be dead, whether it were afterwards to revive again or not.

The above lines might be quoted to show that whatever hopes the author might have of eternal life *to begin at a future time*, he plainly believed in the intermediate nothingness of the soul ; but, like many others, he writes at another time on an opposite supposition. Quite a different doctrine will be found in a letter quoted in another place of this work, and in his ode of "*The dying Christian to his soul*,"—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame  
Quit, oh ! quit this mortal frame."—

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"Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,  
And let *me* languish into life."

"Hark ! they whisper ; angels say,  
Sister spirit, come away."—

"The world recedes ; it disappears !  
• Heaven opens on *my* eyes ! *my* ears  
With sounds seraphic ring !  
Lend, lend your wings ! *I* mount ! *I* fly !  
O grave where is thy victory ?  
O death where is thy sting !"

I may remark here that the victory or power of the grave must continue until the resurrection of the body from it. Neither the grave nor death can properly be said to claim power over the soul at any time, yet not only does the body experience the power of death as long as it lies in the tomb, but the soul also may be said to be affected by the tyrant while in a separate state, because death *has* deprived it of its body. In the same way, a strong man who could violently take away a weak man's house without being permitted to touch the owner, might nevertheless be said to affect the weak man himself as long as he retains his house.

A nearly similar instance of inconsistency with the preceding is to be found in an Eastern elegy among the poems of the Rev. T. Maurice.

‘Hinda, once fairest of the virgin train,  
Who haunt the forest, or who-range the plain,  
*Sleeps where the boughs of yon black cypress wave,*  
And I am left to languish at her grave.”

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‘Oh Hinda, brightest of the black-ey’d maids,  
*That sport in Paradise’ embow’ring shades,—*  
Oh from the bright abodes of purer day  
The prostrate Agib at thy tomb survey.”

The opposers of the intermediate state generally affirm, that the whole time from death to the resurrection is but as the sleep of a night; and that the dead shall awake out of their graves utterly ignorant and insensible of the long distance of time that hath passed since their death, therefore we should be as careful to prepare for the day of judgment, as we would for our entrance into the separate state at death, if there were any such state ready to receive us. Men should be so in reason and justice, but such is too generally the folly of our natures, that we are not influenced by distant prospects, as if the event commenced as soon as ever this mortal life expires.\*

Principal Campbell’s opinion on the mode noticed of reconciling what some think is to be, with what is said in Holy Writ, is plain and just.—“If any thing could add to the native evidence of the expressions” (which are used in Scripture, seemingly to show that the soul neither sleeps nor becomes unconscious at death) “it would be the unnatural meanings that are put upon them in order to disguise that evidence. What shall we say of the metaphysical distinction introduced by some for this purpose, between *absolute* and *relative* time? The Apostle Paul speaks of the saints as admitted to enjoyment, in the presence of God,† imme-

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\* These reasonings on the importance of the present inquiry are mostly from Dr. Watts’ Essay towards the Proof of a Separate State.

† The title of *God*, it should be recollected, is sometimes given to our Saviour who is to be the judge of the world. ‘Them that sleep in Jesus shall *God* bring with him;’ and the Apostle, speaking of this glorious appearance and coming of Christ to judgment, calls him *the great God*, Tit. ii. 13. The

diately after death. Now, to palliate the direct contradiction there is in this to their doctrine, that the vital principle, which is all they mean by the soul, remains extinguished between death and the resurrection, they remind us of the difference there is between absolute or real, and relative or *apparent* time. They admit that, if the Apostle be understood as speaking of *real* time, what is said, flatly contradicts their system; but, say they, his words must be interpreted as spoken, *only* of *apparent* time. He talks indeed of entering on a state of enjoyment, immediately after death, though there may be many thousand years between the one and the other; for, he means only that when that state shall commence, however distant in reality the time may be, the person entering on it will not be sensible of that distance, and consequently there will be to him an apparent coincidence with the moment of his death. But does the Apostle any where hint that this is his meaning? or is it what any man would naturally discover from his words? That it is exceedingly remote from the common use of language, I believe, hardly any of those who favour this scheme will deny. Did the sacred penman then mean to put a cheat upon the world; and, by the help of an equivocal expression, to flatter men with the hope of entering, the instant they

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phrase in our translations is—‘the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,’ but which, according to Archbishop Tillotson, cannot allude to two persons—the Father and the Son; which interpretation, the original will not bear, and which ought rather to be rendered—Jesus Christ the great God and our Saviour. (See this Prelate’s eleventh Sermon “On the certainty of the resurrection.”) St. John also mentions that St. Thomas addressed his master—my Lord and my God.—xx. 28.

I have added this note to show that although our souls in a middle state may see Christ by way of vision or otherwise, it may not be meant that we shall behold God the Father unless as represented by the Son. But God the Father being omnipresent, if we saw him there, and had personal converse with him in our separate state, it would not prove the place or region to be ~~that~~ heaven where we are to be admitted after the judgment, to reside in eternally, more than that the earthly paradise was heaven, where God, in the person of Christ, was often pleased to make himself known to Adam and Eve.

expire, on a state of felicity ; when in fact, they knew that it would be many ages before it would take place ?

“ Even the curious equivocation, (or, perhaps, more properly, mental reservation,) that has been devised for them, will not, in every case, save the credit of Apostolical veracity. The words of Paul to the Corinthians are,—“ knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord :”—again, “ We are . . . willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”\* Could such expressions have been used by him, if he had held it impossible to be with the Lord, or indeed any where without the body ; and that, whatever the change was, which was made by death, he could not be in the presence of the Lord till he returned to the body ? Things are combined here as coincident, which, on the hypothesis of those who think the soul continues unconscious from death till it re-joins the body on its resurrection, are incompatible. If recourse be had to the original, the expressions in Greek are if possible stronger.—In the passage to the Philippians also, the commencement of his presence with the Lord, is represented as coincident, not with his return to the body, but *with his leaving it*, with the dissolution, not with the restoration, of the union.”†

As an actual illustration of such reasonings as those alluded to by Dr. Campbell, being employed by those who are disposed to advocate the sleep of the soul, I shall here quote a few passages from *A Country Pastor's* work already referred to, that the arguments on both sides may be heard:—

“ The long and dreary interval, then, between death and the day of judgment (supposing the intermediate state to be a profound sleep) *does not exist at all*, except in the imagination :‡ to the party concerned there is *no* interval what-

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\* 2 Cor. v. 6. 8.

† From Dr. Campbell's 6th dissertation preceding his translation of the gospels.

‡ The very reverse of this would be the case ; for the long dreary interval would in reality exist, and only the imagination of the sleepers deceived, perhaps, in regard to it. But even during sleep here in the body, we are generally sensible in the morning that we have passed a space of time.



ever," (!) "but to each person (according to this supposition) the moment of his closing his eyes in death, will be instantly succeeded by the sound of the last trumpet which shall summon the dead; even though ages shall have intervened; and in this sense the faithful Christian may be, practically, in paradise\* the day he dies." (!!) "The promise made to the penitent thief, and the Apostle Paul's wish to depart and to be with Christ, which he said was far better than to remain any longer, in this troublesome world, would each be fulfilled to all *practical purposes*, provided each shall have found himself in a state of happiness in the presence of his Lord, the very instant (according to his own perception) after having breathed his last in this world."—"If (it may be said) he expected to remain in a profound sleep from death till the resurrection, why should he speak of his impatience to be with Christ?" "Since his dying sooner or later would make no difference as to the time when the last day shall arrive?"†—Can it be said to be a satisfactory answer which the pastor gives to this his own question, that the Apostle knew that when he was dead he would be unconscious of his insensibility, and that however soon he died, he did not expect to be in the presence of Christ, or happy in spirit, before those who died long after him, or indeed, till the general resurrection. If the pastor be right, St. Paul's wish to be gone, and his *impatience* to be so, could only have arisen from a desire to be *insensible*, for that was all he would have attained sooner than other men, if he had preceded them; but the Apostle's expression is an explicit contradiction of such an expectation, for he desired to arrive *sooner* than his friends in the presence of Christ, and *while they remained in this world*, else his impatience was without the motive he assigned to it.

An eminent divine, who may now be said to be at the

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\* Practically and actually he shall be so, but it is not the paradise of *heaven* but of the *middle state*.

† Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State.

head of the Scottish Presbyterian Church,—Dr. Chalmers,—thus speaks of the state of the departed :—“Time with its mighty strides will soon reach a future generation, and leave the present in death and in *forgetfulness* behind it. *The grave will close upon every one of us*, and that is the dark and silent cavern, where no voice is heard, and the light of the sun never enters.”\* If the soul is, as it ought to be, considered as the principal part of man, and is that part of him which thinks, feels, wills, and continues its consciousness after the body has undergone the change which soon follows death, this is surely needlessly disheartening language to use, as it must tend to mislead those who wish to know the state of the soul immediately after death. *The same power* which in life could *remember*, does not sink into *forgetfulness* on death, and Dr. Chalmers must not perhaps be seriously imagined to believe in the sleep of the soul during the dissolution of its earthly habitation, when such a doctrine is in direct opposition to the tenets of the church of which he is so esteemed a member ; but a similar style of writing is too often indulged in by those who do not at the time reflect on its tendency, and on the inferences which may be drawn from it as to their *own* opinions, and as a guide to those of others who look up to them as expounders of our faith on so important a point. While under the power of death *we* are not, therefore, in a state of forgetfulness, for *the mind* still remains active, and remembers the vicissitudes of life on this globe. The soul cannot lose remembrance and consciousness if it still remain a soul in its disembodied state, else we must suppose it made up of parts, and be capable of existence when the most essential of them are wanting ! How can the grave be said to close over *us*, when the immortal and unconscious principle is not there, and when the spirits of the just are represented as abiding in the dazzling light of paradise, conversing with their fellow saints and with angels, putting up their prayers to God, while awaiting in joyful but impatient expectation the rising

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\* Sermon on the transitory nature of visible things.

of a renewed body from the tomb? In some passages of the Old Testament there is a certain degree of obscurity as to the present state of the dead, but a clearer light broke through the gloom by the New, which showed that those, who believed the soul was conveyed in the first place to *Hades*, were right, and that it could there see, speak, and remember. As to the notions of the Jewish nation in regard to the place they so denominated, it is not my present object to inquire, all I ~~now~~ aim at establishing is, that the soul does not at death enter on a state of insensibility, and is then set free from the body.

Some may here exclaim against the supposition of any person in these enlightened times, who are good Christians, imagining that the soul sleeps *in the grave*; as poetical language, they may think, alone represents it to do; but if it sleeps *at all* during the time the body is there, *where is it supposed to sleep?* In what dormant region does it slumber? Is it believed that sleeping souls are laid side by side, like embalmed mummies in the Egyptian catacombs? or mixed without any individuality in one common mass of a spiritual nature? Is there a general Necropolis for separate souls? Do the Scriptures speak of such a city of the senseless departed? Never.—I know of no authority or ground of probability for assigning the disembodied soul any other place during its imagined torpor where it can even be said to repose *without sense*, than the grave; and there, like a bat in its winter quarters, it may be fancied sleeping as well as any where else, if sleep it really does. If it follows the fate of the body, it should be recollected, that many bodies are never in a grave at all, but are left to consume on the surface of the earth; or, (as is still a very common practice with some nations) are burned to ashes and scattered by the wind. Where sleeps the soul in such cases? Is it on the ground, liable to be trodden under foot? Does it in these instances burrow into the earth; or is it taken by divine command, the moment death, freeing it from the body, lays it to sleep, and then carried to a common place of insensible rest?—Such bewildering labyrinths of conjecture combine

to confound those who hold the sleep of the soul as a natural consequence of death.

One of the latest works which treat of *the sleep of the soul after death*, is "*The Philosophy of Sleep*," by Mr. Macnish, a chapter of which is so entitled, and we might expect to find there some light thrown on the subject, so as to direct our belief; but it merely tells us that the author is wholly at a loss how to decide on it.—"Theological writers," he says, "have never been able to agree upon the state of the soul during that period which elapses between death and the resurrection. Some conceive that on the decease of the body, it is at once transferred to the endless pains or bliss awarded to it by the fiat of the Eternal. Others imagine that it continues in a state of sleep till the day of judgment; when it awakes from the torpor which enchained it in forgetfulness; and, from that moment, enters, at once, either into everlasting punishment or everlasting felicity. These are the two great leading opinions on this subject; and each has been maintained with equal zeal, piety, and learning, by many of our most able divines. On a path where the views of the best and wisest men are at variance, and where the lights to guide us are so faint and obscure, it is perhaps most prudent not to venture very far; for, where their intellectual vision has proved insufficient to pierce through the veil of mystery in which it is shrouded, it is not likely that our far more limited faculties can succeed. Nor is this to be regretted; for whether the energies of the soul are suspended in a temporary sleep till the last day, or whether it springs at once into the state of joy or punishment destined for it by God, the question of its immortality remains unaffected; and the inducements to religion, and whatever may tend to bestow an eternity of happiness instead of sorrow, are in both cases the same."

And this is *the whole* information which the author can give us, when writing on the sleep of the soul! Because a soul on awakening out of insensibility would not be conscious of the time it had passed in torpidity, it matters not to us, we are told, (and Mr. Macnish seems to think it of small

importance,) whether our spirits shall pass several thousand years in the calm delights of paradise,—in a region of an opposite nature, or in oblivion altogether ! Is it of no consequence also, whether we understand the Scriptures, or consider them full of inconsistencies and contradictions. I am inclined to think that most people will be of a very different opinion on these points from Mr. Macnish. When one belief is that the soul does not sleep after death, and another that it does,—only one of these must be wrong, and therefore those who maintain the other, must have discovered the truth ; so it cannot be said, classing them together, (as Mr. M. does) that *their* intellectual vision has been unable to pierce the veil. One very “leading opinion,” he takes no notice of, or that the soul exists in a middle state in one way or other, before it is consigned to its everlasting punishment or reward : The whole Roman Catholic Christians believing in the middle state of purgatory, while many Protestants hold that there is *an* intermediate region which is not purgatory. If our spirits dissipate into parts, losing their memory, feeling, and senses generally, till the body revive again, the question of the immortality of the soul may be truly said to be decided in the negative, and their future return to life would be rendered very doubtful ; for such a state of unconsciousness would so plainly contradict many parts of the great Record on which we place our chief hopes of future happiness, that we could scarcely know what to depend on in it, when such explicit declarations as there are of a state immediately to succeed death, must be held of no meaning, or to indicate the very opposite of what they seem so clearly to imply.

The motto, too, which Mr. Macnish has taken from the writings of the poet Campbell, and placed at the head of a chapter which professes to be unable to form an opinion, (and even shows no leaning to either side,) is particularly inappropriate : for it justly assumes that the soul is not enchained insensibly in that *terra incognita*, the unknown land, as it is falsely called, *of forgetfulness*, if it is *the soul itself* which is thought to forget, and *the body never* remembered.

Cold in the dust this perish'd heart may lie,  
But that which warm'd it once shall never die,  
That spark unburied in its mortal frame,  
With living light, eternal and the same,  
Shall beam on joys interminable years,  
Unveiled by darkness, unassuaged by tears !"

In the opinion of Dr. Olinthus Gregory, (whose scientific powers of investigation are held in the highest esteem) "the notion of *soul sleeping* is not without danger ; since it deprives religion of its most cogent motives, or at least weakens them excessively. How, you may ask, do any persons contrive to deduce it from Scripture ? Entirely, I believe, from the circumstance that death is frequently in Scripture depicted under the image of sleep. Dead persons are there often said to be 'fallen asleep ;'—"but in such passages the word *sleep* is used in reference to the body, and I know not one in which the same metaphor is employed in allusion to the soul." This author then quotes several passages in reference to the body alone.\* After noticing many texts which establish that sleep cannot be applied to the soul, he concludes the argument thus :—"These passages, which have been quoted again and again to refute the doctrine of soul sleeping, will, I doubt not, fully suffice to convince you that the doctrine is directly contradictory to many of the most stimulating and cheering promises in the New Testament." †

The Rev. Mr. Huntingford, in the introduction to his work entitled, "*Testimonies in proof of the separate existence of the soul in a state of self-consciousness between death and the resurrection,*" observes that—"As long as there shall exist ingenious men, demanding for every question mathematical demonstration, and carrying to excess their love of subtle reasoning, so long will every truth (even the most awful truths of religion) meet with opposition. We must not wonder then that the generally received notion of the

\* See Dan. xii. 2.—Matt. xxvii. 52.—and Acts xiii. 36, 37.

† Letters on the evidences of the Christian Religion, Vol. II. p. 270.

uninterrupted self consciousness of the soul has by some been doubted, and by others denied.”—“It is much to be lamented that there should be some persons, who whilst on other points they most ably defend opinions commendable and just, yet favour, to a greater extent than they seem to be aware, the worst tenets of scepticism ; by countenancing the strange conceit that though body and soul shall both be alive again at the general resurrection, yet that during the interval between death and that event, the soul shall be torpid and unconscious of her own existence !”

When even eminent Masters in Theology inculcate the total extinction of all thought at death,—that soul and body die and revive together, (consequently that all our progenitors are now insensible,)—that if the soul is not lying slumbering in the grave with the remains of the body, it is sleeping as profoundly as the clay in some vast sepulchre for spirits, no one can tell where, or even give it a name, —it is no wonder that many others less learned, adopt the same gloomy ideas.

Mr. Muston makes the following remarks to the same purpose :—“It is well known that not a few professing Christians have thought the human soul does not retain its consciousness after death, but that it exists in a state of profound torpor, from which it will not awake till the last trumpet shall sound, and summon it, in union with its re-animated body to the tribunal of God. It must be confessed that this doctrine holds out to us a cheerless prospect. For, though the intervening period, how much soever protracted, would be but as a moment to a Being insensible to the lapse of time, yet the anticipation of such a condition is fitted to excite in the mind of every good man the most powerful sensations. It threatens him with a positive and irretrievable loss, and in effect, with temporary annihilation, at the idea of which the mind instinctively recoils. It deepens the gloom of the grave, and sharpens the pangs of separation from the objects of his virtuous love, by deferring the pleasing hope of renewed communication with them. This dismal doctrine rests, it would seem, upon the assumption,

that the thinking principle necessarily depends for its consciousness and enjoyment upon its connexion with organized matter : and this opinion has been strengthened by those passages of Scripture which represent the death of the believer under the beautiful and impressive image of *slumber*. But the assumption is directly at variance with the testimony of Scripture, which declares the soul and body of man to be two distinct and separable substances. And the image of sleep, as applied to the dead, appears to be used only in reference to the *bodies* of the just, which are destined on the morning of the resurrection to awake in the freshness of resuscitated strength and immortal beauty.”\*

It does not *at once*, however, appear clear in every passage where the Scriptures speak of death as a sleep, that nevertheless the soul continues awake all the while. But even were the allusion to the soul itself, the expressions do not render the waking or self-consciousness of the soul after death, more improbable than that it wakes while the body is sleeping, which we are sensible by a thousand dreams that it does. It even dreams, as has been before said, when no remembrance of them remains on our awakening, and, indeed, many facts contribute to induce a belief that the soul *never* while in the body loses its consciousness, although we may not be always sensible of it afterwards, for this depends on the *memory*. As a sleeping man ceases to act in the businesses of this life, although the soul be not dead or unthinking, so death is called sleep, because during that state, men are cut off from the affairs of the earth, though the soul may think and act in another.†

In the Old Testament, *the dead* are, indeed, often described as lying in a state of insensibility, but it is an insensibility to the affairs of this world as direct objects of sense : they

\* Recognition in the world to come. 1830.

† A burial place is often with us called a *Cemetery*, which is a word derived from the Greek, and signifies a place of sleep, in reference to the metaphoric sleep of the dead spoken of in Scripture, and which name (when it is understood in its derivation) may have contributed to mislead some into the idea of the sleep of the soul in the earth.



are withdrawn from among living men into a world of their own, and when there is allusion made solely to their mortal part, it may be said to go into the house of darkness, sleep, silence, and oblivion ; but it does not thence follow that the soul shares the fate of the body. Thus Homer supposes the shades of the dead to live as individual beings in Hades ; to remember perfectly their lives upon earth, with all their transactions ; retaining their loves, friendships, and sentiments, all as displayed in life here ; and yet this great ancient philosopher and poet sometimes represents death as a state of insensibility, which can therefore only refer to the body.

The words *soul* and *spirit*, as we find them in some passages of our translation of the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, are often taken from words in the original intended merely to signify *animal life* and *breath*. “God will redeem my soul from the grave ; for he shall receive me,”\* means that the grave shall receive and have power over the body, but not so with the soul, which shall be received by God. “Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion *for ever*.”† On this text Dr. Watts remarks :—“In these verses, receiving to glory, seems *immediately* to follow a guidance through this world, and when the flesh and heart of the Psalmist should fail him in death, God continued to be his portion for ever, God would receive him to Himself, as such a portion, and thereby he gave strength and courage to his heart even in a dying hour.” It would be a very odd and unnatural exposition of this text to interpret it only of the resurrection of the body, thus :—“Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel through this life, and after the long interval of some thousand years, thou wilt receive me to glory.” I may add, that though the place prepared for the souls of the just in a separate state, must be one of great glory in comparison with their state on earth, exposed often to misery in

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\* Ps. xlix. 15.

† Ps. lxxiii. 24.

all its varied shapes, yet it must be greatly inferior to that heaven into which men are to be admitted after the resurrection ; and the glory alluded to, therefore, does not refer to that of **the** latter.

In interpreting the Scriptures, we must always understand them in any particular passage, as consistent with the plain sense of others, and endeavour to discover how apparent differences may be reconciled. If this rule is followed, the insensible sleep of the soul after death will be found to be impossible to have been contemplated by the sacred writers. Common language with us now, has not so usually recourse to metaphor as it seems to have had in ancient times, and we are too apt to judge of the meanings of the expressions used in those days as we would do if they were written in our own. Although, for instance, it is said by Job, that *the grave is the house appointed for all living*,\* yet he lets us see distinctly in other places that he only meant it as the house to which our *bodies* must go when they die ; as indeed all the Scriptural authors show their belief in a similar manner in regard to the soul, although they may in some texts use the strongest similes from sleep.

It must be admitted, however, by all Christians, that the Old Testament writers had very obscure and indefinite ideas of a future state in comparison of what *we* ought to have, when we consider so much new information regarding death as the gospel discloses. Is it not strange that partial and insulated passages should still be quoted from these old authors in a literal interpretation, as illustrative of the state of death, and in contradiction, at the same time, of the tenets of our faith, which disbelieves any death-sleep of the soul ? So far are we likewise from considering *the earthly body* of man as his principal part, that all who study the Scriptures regard it only as the temporary dwelling of the soul. Keeping these observations in view, must we not allow that such paraphrases as the following of the oldest writings which exist, have an evident tendency to mislead ?—

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\* Chap. xxx. 23.

"How still and peaceful is the grave,  
Where, life's vain tumults past,  
Th' appointed house, by Heaven's decree,  
Receives us all at last.

"The wicked there from troubling cease,  
Their passions rage no more ;  
And there the weary pilgrim rests  
From all the toils he bore.

"There rest the prisoners, now releas'd  
From slavery's sad abode ;  
No more they hear th' oppressor's voice,  
Or dread the tyrant's rod.

"There servants, masters, small and great,  
Partake the same repose ;  
And there in peace the ashes mix  
Of those who once were foes.

"All level'd by the hand of Death,  
Lie sleeping in the tomb ;  
Till God in judgment calls them forth  
To meet their final doom."†

The above plainly inculcates the sleep of the soul at death, and as it thereby contradicts the Confession of Faith, the Presbyterian Church does its own creed injustice by retaining in her service so melancholy and untrue an idea of death as a congregation would be apt to draw from so sad a picture, when apparently brought forward as a Christian belief. It must be clear to any one who investigates the knowledge and opinions which prevailed in the dawnings of wisdom which have reached our days, that sleep, when used in such allusions, merely meant a state of *repose* but not of *insensibility*, else Isaiah and others would never have spoken of the departed as they did. Seeming to favour the opposite belief, however, the foregoing paraphrase amplifies and renders this mistaken meaning much more conducive towards

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\* There can be no dispute but that this refers to the soul, as indeed the whole paraphrase tends to a belief that the mental powers share the fate of the body, else what is said would not apply to *us*.

† Fourth Paraphrase.—See also the Seventh, 12, 13, to the same effect.

the notion of the soul's insensibility after this life than the original passage does, and leads people to think that such is the proper and Christian idea of death if they compare it with no other texts of an opposite nature; and if they do, the comparison is sure to lead them into uncertainty on the subject. Several points are expressed much more darkly in the Old than in the New Testament. Previous to the death of our Saviour, the wisest among the Jews expected from the prophecies in the Old Testament that Christ would become an earthly sovereign, sitting on the throne of David, and would free them from every thralldom;—nay, even his own disciples thought so till his resurrection, when he expounded the Scriptures to them more correctly, and the Holy Spirit illuminated their minds. We are, therefore, to read the Old Testament *by the light of the New*. Although we receive much important information from the first, and greatly as we ought to venerate it from being the record of many Divine revelations, particularly those which intimated the coming of our Redeemer, yet it is not a Work which fully developes either the religion or knowledge by which we shall be tried. It does not appear that the world, prior to Christ's sojourn here as a man, was in a fit state to receive the pure and sublime morality which he taught, and experience has shown us knowledge to be progressive in its communication from God. We are now not only freed from the mere ceremonial observances of the Jewish law as detailed in the Old Testament, but are taught a more heavenly conduct than what there often seems to have guided even good men. Instead, for instance, of praying for vengeance on our enemies, and treating conquered foes with unsparing cruelty, we are told in the New, that vengeance belongs to God alone,—to forgive our enemies,—not only to love our neighbour, but to pray for those who spitefully use us,—and to return good for evil,—while mercy is promised to him who is merciful.

In the Rev. Mr. Polwhele's essay on the scriptural evidences which show that the soul after death is not in a state

of insensibility, his ideas on the sleep of the soul are clear and rational. I shall here abridge the concluding section :—

“The supposition that the soul immediately after death is in a state of insensibility, is a theory so contrary to the very nature and attributes of the soul, that independent on sacred writ, the metaphysician would scruple to adopt it, since even in sleep, when the organs of sense are shut up—when the body lies quiescent, he finds the soul still vigorous and alert, clear in its recollections, and rapid in its imaginings.

“Embracing a notion in itself so unintelligible, and only to be conceived, as synonymous with at least a temporary annihilation, the guilty might hope to escape from the recognizance of their guilt to the land of darkness and oblivion.

“If the discontinuance of the soul’s exertions be thought probable,—if the soul be thought to drop insensible as into nothing, to be recovered at some moment, far remote in the ages of futurity ; is it not easy to flatter ourselves with the persuasion, that to thousands of years may be added thousands more ? And are not such thousands, to our span of comprehension, equivalent to eternity ? Is it not natural to ask, (for it has been asked,) ‘where is the promise of his coming ? For since the Fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning ?’ They, through whom such things were promised, such threatenings denounced, are all ‘fallen asleep,’ and have been so for many generations. Is it probable that they will ever awake to life, since the world goes on as in their days ?

“But if he that is guilty in life, retain, without pause of intromission, the feeling of his offences, the hour of his dissolution will be fearful when at a distance, and on a nearer prospect, full of terror. In the mean time, those who endeavour to lead a just life—if they begin to harbour the melancholy thought of the consciousness of the soul depending on the co-existence of the corporeal frame—that as the one dies, the other becomes insensible,—is it possible to preclude from their apprehension the image of the soul evaporated—extinguished ; will they not shudder at the dreary void im-

mediately in prospect? But if the religious man be convinced that as soon as the pangs of death are passed, he shall go where, secure from sin and sorrow, he shall rejoice in a good conscience, and live in the expectation of his ultimate reward—when his soul shall reanimate the body, these doubtless are reflections that must powerfully operate on the moral character, and tend greatly to dispel the gloom of despondence.”

Bishop Law considers that the Scriptures represent the state to which death reduces us as one of *sleep*, by a *negation of all life, thought, or action*; by *rest*, a *resting place, or home*; *silence, oblivion, darkness, destruction*, or corruption. He gives a very copious selection of texts, in which the state of death is represented under all these respective images; but the attentive reader will not fail to remark, that there is not one of all these passages, in which the *soul* or *spirit*, is separately spoken of as being in a state of sleep, or of inaction, of oblivion, destruction, or corruption. Dr. Law, who believes that the Scriptures give no countenance to the opinion, that the soul is capable of existing and acting apart from the body, takes it for granted that these passages are designed to represent the condition to which the whole man—spirit—soul and body—is reduced by death.

Agreeably to this view, revelation, he says, informs us that we shall not *awake*, or be made alive, till the resurrection: that the wicked shall not be severed from the righteous till the same time, or at the coming of Christ on the last day, at which event the world shall be judged, and not till then.

As to the first, he is most assuredly wrong, but he is strictly orthodox in thinking that the first great and decided separation between the good and the bad, in different regions at a distance from, and out of sight of each other *for their final residence*, shall not take place till the last day; and also, that the day of judgment described in such awful terms in Scripture, is the only time when men shall be tried and sentenced, for we are no where informed of any other. Dr. Law examines in detail the principal objections or texts

usually alleged to prove the contrary doctrine, or of the continued life or waking of the soul. His solutions of these passages for the most part are extremely forced and unsatisfactory, in as far as regards the soul's sleep of insensibility,\* which I shall soon proceed to show by some examples, and in the rest of this chapter I shall farther demonstrate how untenable his doctrine is, and how unsubstantial the arguments are which its supporters urge for it.

In Dr. Watts' Essay on Separate Spirits, he concludes the 4th section in these words :—"I am not concerned in that question whether human souls separated from their bodies, have any other corporeal vehicle to which they are united, or by which they act during the intermediate state between death and the resurrection. All that I propose to maintain here is, that that period or interval, is not a state of sleep, that is, of utter unconsciousness and inactivity; and whether they be united to a vehicle or no, I call it still the separate state, because it is a state of the soul's separation from this body, which is united to it in the present life."

The Rev. Dr. Jortin, a prebend of St. Paul's, wrote a treatise entitled the "*Doctrine of a future state*," where he sums up the arguments and inferences as follows :—"1st, That the soul of man subsists after death, and hath some place of abode till the resurrection. 2dly, That this intermediate state is not a state of insensibility, but of thought and self-consciousness;—and consequently of content and happiness in a certain degree to the righteous." It may also be inferred and maintained that if the righteous souls are happy, those of the wicked are miserable.

In a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Deuchal, after quoting several passages from Holy Writ, he observes :—"These clearly enough prove that the spirit is really a different thing from the body, and can subsist and be happy without it; and no doubt miserable too; and this hath been the sense of the church in all ages. They had indeed, an opi-

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\* This is also the opinion of the "*British Critic or Theological Review*," No. for July, 1829, from which several of the remarks in the preceding page are taken.

nion, and for this there wanteth not reason, that the spirits of good men in the intermediate state, had not their full reward till the resurrection and general judgment; and that this should be the commencement of their perfect felicity; but no one dreamed of their intermediate state as a state of utter insensibility, which is indeed contrary to the dictates of reason as well as of the Holy Scriptures. Let us rest assured, that what in us thinketh and acteth, what is the seat of sentiment and affection, is a thing different from matter, and not to be affected, so as to be destroyed and deprived of its powers, by the dissolution of the material frame: and when our Maker called us first into existence, and gave us to be men, he conferred this gift upon us, as what was never to be recalled." \*

The celebrated and pious Dr. Blair, minister of the High Church, Edinburgh, although he falls into the common mistake of imagining that the freed soul goes at once to its heaven of eternal happiness, yet clearly expounds the Scripture to mean that it sinks not at death into an oblivion of sense. "A sacred veil conceals the mansions of glory. But in general these expressions of the text plainly import that the spirits of good men shall, *upon death*, be translated from an imperfect to a glorious state."—"The earthly house of this tabernacle is to be dissolved, but the soul which inhabits it remains"—"It is so far from following, that the soul must cease to act on the dissolution of the body, that it seems rather to follow, that it will then act in a more perfect manner."† "That city of the living God, towards which you profess to bend your course, is prepared for the reception of citizens innumerable. *It already abounds with inhabitants*; and more and more shall be added to it, until the end of time."—"Though the gate stands not so wide as that which opens into hell,† yet through the narrow gate multitudes have entered."—"Were you permitted to draw aside the

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\* Deuchal's Sermons, Vol. I. p. 175.

† Sermon 81st.

† This ought, more strictly and properly speaking, to have been called *the Tartarus of Hades*, as the gates of the hell for the damned are not yet opened.



veil, and to view the diversified assembly of the blessed who surround the throne, you would behold among them numbers who have overcome the same difficulties which encounter you.”\*

“It is hardly possible,” says the *British Critic and Theological Review*, “by any sophistry to reconcile St. Paul’s language to the hypothesis that the soul neither has, nor can have any existence apart from the body. When he says—‘*We are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord,*’—is it not doing the greatest imaginable violence to the plain and natural meaning of these expressions to say with Dr. Law, that the phrase, ‘*being absent from the body,*’ can have no relation to an intermediate state, but rather denotes the life of saints after the resurrection,—when, be it observed, they most certainly *are not* ‘*absent from the body.*’ ”

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians,† says—“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ ; which is far better : Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”—“I would ask any reasonable man,” says Dr. Watts, “to determine whether, when St. Paul speaks of his being with Christ after his departure from the flesh, he can suppose that the Apostle did not expect to see Christ till the resurrection, which he knew would be a considerable distance of time, though perhaps it has proved many hundred years longer than the Apostle himself expected it. No ; it is evident, he hoped to ‘be present with the Lord’ *immediately*, as soon as he was ‘absent from the body,’ otherwise death would have been but to him of little gain, if he must have been sleeping till the dead shall rise at the general resurrection.”

Our Saviour exhorts his disciples :—“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,” &c.‡ which text, Dr. Law seems greatly at a loss to explain, consistently with his idea of the soul sleeping. What can be more clear than the sense in which this must be taken. If

\* Sermon 21th.

† Chap. i. 23, 24.

‡ Matt. x. 28.

the soul had such a necessary dependence on the body as to fall insensible or die with it, the same fatal blow would murder the soul as well as the body. But we are told by Him also, who is truth itself, that this is impossible for man to do, the soul remaining after the death of the body, and no created power is able to destroy it. If it be said that this is meant only of the utter destruction of the soul, which no man is able to effect, as God has promised a resurrection to life again, our Saviour might as well have denied that it was in the power of man to kill the body of another man, that is, to destroy it utterly and finally, because God will raise it again at the last day. But he grants that the body may be killed by man in the same sense that he denies that the soul can be destroyed by him.

In a parallel passage it is said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."\* It is impossible to conceive a plainer intimation than this, that the soul dies not with the body. It is added by St. Luke to the above—"But I will forewarn you whom to fear : fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell." The Greek word here signifies the hell of torments, *Gehenna*, not *Hades* ; so I am inclined to believe that St. Luke's version of our Saviour's words shows that it was meant only, that God was to be feared as he could cast both soul\*and body into hell and punish them there, as the wicked shall ultimately be : not that God could *annihilate* the soul in hell, as some may infer from *destroy* as used by St. Matthew. I may observe, that I am here merely arguing on the proper understanding of the words of our Lord, as recorded by these two Apostles, not on the actual extent of the Almighty's power.

In the same understanding we should read that text in St. Matthew, where it is asked—"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and *lose his own soul*?"† which does not mean that a soul can literally be lost, or, in other words, become extinct. It is fully declared

in the Scriptures, that even the most wicked souls shall not be lost to existence, but live on, both in *Hades before*, and in *Gehenna after* the judgment, when they shall be punished for their deeds. But though the immortal spirit shall not be annihilated, it may be entirely lost to happiness, and it may suffer so much misery, that *being* may become a most grievous burden : and this is, no doubt, what our Saviour meant to be understood from his words.

*The Theological Review* remarks on the text from St. Luke, "that it was our Lord's chief design to point out the great distinction between this and the next life, and to impress on the minds of his hearers, a salutary conviction of the superior importance of futurity, is what no man in his senses will question : That it was his design here to teach that the soul is capable of suffering in an intermediate state, no man who understands the language of Scripture will affirm ; for the words that the Lord makes use of to denote the state or place of punishment is not *Hades* but *Gehenna*. The question, however, is, whether his words do not necessarily imply a separate existence of the soul. Dr. Law, (while arguing against an intermediate state) says that they do not : but afterwards, in the very next sentence, admits in point of fact, that they do, and endeavours to weaken their force by suggesting, that when Christ distinguished the soul from the body, he may be conceived to accommodate his language to the popular opinion which then prevailed among the Jews. In the very same way, and with just as much reason, (that is, none at all,) an objector who thought proper to deny that the doctrine of the resurrection was taught by our Lord and his Apostles, might say, that, when they seem to speak of a resurrection of the body,\* they may be conceived merely to be adapting themselves to the peculiar language of the time, (for the Jews prior to the coming of Christ, unquestionably

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\* It is nowhere said in Scripture that the *identical* body which died, shall rise again, but that *Man* shall arise—shall again have a material body attached to his soul—a body which shall spring from the remains of the former, but *changed* in a great degree, and instead of being formed to decay and perish, shall have an immortal nature.

held this doctrine, but that in fact, nothing more is really meant than a rising from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. If Christ had intended expressly to affirm that the soul continues to exist after the death of the body, he could hardly have done it in plainer language than that which he here employs. "Tyrants," he says, "kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul;" that is, (if we will take Dr. Law's own explanation of the state of death,) they are not able to reduce the soul to that state of sleep, oblivion, and inactivity to which they bring the body by depriving it of life. The doctrine of the soul's separate existence after the death of the body is plainly asserted; and the final restoration of the body is almost as plainly implied in the contrasted use of the words to *kill* and *destroy*. Though tyrants kill the body; they cannot *destroy* it; the soul they cannot even *kill*; but God is able to *destroy* both body and soul in hell. That this text alone, and unsupported by the general tenor of Scripture, and especially of the New Testament, is sufficient to establish the doctrine of an intermediate state it would be rashness to affirm; but if the doctrine of the resurrection, which, by the confession of all, is a prominent feature in the Christian revelation, stood only on a single text, however clear *that* might seem in its literal meaning, it might perhaps require a figurative interpretation. But as the matter stands, the plain meaning of our Lord's expressions in this passage cannot be explained away but on the admission of a principle, that in its extended explication would directly overthrow every important and peculiar tenet of the Christian faith. For if one person may get rid of the doctrine of *the uninterrupted consciousness and separate existence of the soul* on the ground that our Lord, when he literally asserts it, merely accommodates his language to popular prejudice, without intending to affirm the truth of the doctrine, another on the very same ground may deny the doctrines of a resurrection and a future life, and others the mediation and atonement."\*

If the promise, in reply to the petition of the dying malefactor, "*Lord, remember me when thou comest to thy kingdom,*" had not received its accomplishment till the final resurrection, it could, in fact, never have been fulfilled at all. For at the end of the world, when death, the last enemy, shall have been destroyed, Christ shall deliver up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father.

There have been great pains taken by some to show that the points should be altered, and the comma placed after the words *to-day*, thus,—“I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with me in paradise,” that is, some time or other hereafter. As though Christ had said or meant no more than this, viz. “Thou askest me to remember thee when I come to my kingdom, and I declare unto thee truly this very day, that some long time hereafter thou shalt be with me in happiness at thy resurrection, when *my kingdom* shall be at an end, and I shall give it all up to my Father,” as in 1st Corinth. xv. 24.

Can any one, who has no favourite theory or meaning to prove or defend, against which the most obvious interpretation of our Saviour's promise would clearly strike, imagine this last explanation to be the true sense of the answer to the prayer of the dying penitent, particularly when it has been shown, that as a Jew, he could not have understood it but in the plain meaning which his countrymen would have done. His very prayer showed that he was acquainted with their belief in a future state, to commence immediately upon death, and it could be no information to him, that his Saviour should assure him that it was *that day* he was speaking to him, or making the promise. The robber must have expected an immediate answer to his request, either one acceding to it, or a refusal, and “*this day*,” must therefore relate, on this account also, to the time when the promise *was to be accomplished*.

Dr. Olinthus Gregory thinks any such explanations of our Saviour's words, which would endeavour to postpone the happiness of the robber's soul to a future and indefinite time beyond that very day whereon he died, “would be sad-

ly trifling with the trembling penitent's feelings ; and would be, besides, perfectly incompatible both with the character of the Saviour, and with the solemn and important purposes for which he was then suffering."\*

The Review before quoted, in one place feels—"disposed to conjecture that our Saviour may have meant to convey to the repentant criminal little more than this—'to-day (that is, when you are released from the body,) your lot shall be the same as mine, so far as relates to your eternal peace—there shall await you nothing hereafter but a state of bliss, whether immediately or eventual.'"

Here, *the time* referred to, is admitted to be at the moment of death, and the promise to regard the condition of the soul of the criminal. Now, if Christ's soul was not *then* immediately translated to paradise—to the blissful region which the Jews unquestionably understood by that term, then the promise was plainly not fulfilled. Even had the *limitations* and *conditions* been added, as the Reviewer has here supposed to be the meaning, (which they were not,) still, it requires evidence, that our Lord's soul lay unconscious while absent from the body, to even imagine that the robber's did the same, for the Reviewer admits they were to share the same fate. To believe that Christ's spirit went to a state of happiness on his death, while the robber's did not, (supposing it should only be so admitted *some time*) is in the very face of the promise. The Reviewer would have done well to have referred to an opinion on the same point, *in a former number of the same Review*, where the above passage in Holy Writ is cited as a decided proof of the continued consciousness of the soul.†

It was on that day when there "was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, when Jesus said :—Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit !" And is it probable that Christ would have *so commended his spirit* had it been about to sink into insensibility ? His enemies might "kill his

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\* Letters on the Evidences, &c. of the Christian Religion, Vol. II. p. 272.

† See Nos. for July, 1829, and January, 1831.

body," but they could not "kill his soul." His saints also prayed to the same effect in their dying moments. Jesus then "*gave up the ghost.*" The penitent also expired, and doubtless they both went that very day to the region of spirits, and into that part of it where the just are in felicity. "Lord, remember me!"—"To-day, shalt thou be with me in paradise." Memory is here shown to be retained by the departed souls, and love and gratitude. I hold this to be sufficient evidence that our Lord's soul was in the *Paradise of Hades*, but there is also as good ground for believing that he visited its *Tartarus*, or the part where disobedient souls are confined, which we shall afterwards consider.

Although I never heard it urged or even suggested that the *continuance* in consciousness after death, of our Saviour's soul, was no rule for what should become of ours, I am surprised that so specious an argument at first sight, was never brought forward by those who advocate a sleep of the soul at death. They might say, that although our Lord's soul did go to *Hades*, and was perfectly sensible all the time his body lay in the tomb, yet *he* had a *divine* nature or spirit which we have not; therefore we cannot compare *our* souls with *his* one. Allowing this, in so far, yet, wherever his divine spirit was, while separated from his earthly body, there too must have been the soul of the robber, and from that day to this, all good Christians pray when dying as our Saviour did, that God may be pleased to receive their souls, and that they may enter into the place of rest for a season, till he be pleased to set them free at the call to the resurrection and judgment. Our Saviour's soul remained in the unseen mansions until the time came that his body should rise from its state of death, so shall ours. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."\*

The Rev. Mr. Gleig says that the angel who "rolled back the stone from the grave of the Messiah, *roused its inmate from slumber,*"† which is a mere assumption, and

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\* Rom. vi. 5.

† History of the Bible, Vol. II. p. 309.

could not possibly have been the case. Our Lord's human body had remained in the tomb since it was laid there on the Friday evening ; but *He*, that is, his soul, went to Hades, the place of human separate spirits, or into *hell*, as the Creed expresses it, (with the same meaning) where, according to St. Peter, he made proclamation to the spirits who were there in confinement ; so his soul had merely to return from this place, and resume its body, which required no stone to be rolled away to give it exit, for he afterwards came into the room where the disciples sat with the door shut. The tombstone was removed not to let our Saviour out, but to allow the women and the disciples to go in, and it is evident from St. Matthew's account, that he had risen and departed *before* the stone was rolled back. Christ arose from the dead *of his own power*, (having before shown that he had command over life and death) his soul required no permission to return from the region of departed spirits, for he reigns there undisputed king of his saints and of all who are in it, and his body needed no assistance to return to life, having miraculously and entirely out of the common course continued untainted by corruption ;—it had lain dead—it experienced the sleep of death (if it is chosen so to term it,) but it required no awakening by any other power than that of his returned spirit : the merely reanimating his lifeless body could not properly be called awakening *him* from slumber, in any but a metaphorical sense, unless his soul had also become insensible at his death, and afterwards regained its consciousness, which, however, it is clear that it could never have lost. We have reason to believe that our Saviour's soul did not return from Hades *alone*, but in company with those of many of his saints, who came to join in his triumphant return to the heaven of their reward. The graves which were opened at the crucifixion did not yield up their tenants until after the resurrection of our Saviour, (according to St. Matthew's account,) and it is therefore almost more than probable that their souls came back with their Lord's.

“ The arguments, on which the deniers of a *Middle State*



2 Thess. iv. 10. 'The dead in Christ shall rise first,' that is, the Christians that are dead before the second coming of Christ, shall first be raised, before those that are alive shall be changed.\* Heb. xi. 13. All those died in faith, that is, in firm belief of God's promise of a better life. So that to sleep in Christ, to be Christ's, to die in Christ, to die in the faith, do all seem to signify the same thing, viz. to die in the state of true Christians.

"There is one difficulty more about the sleep of the soul, which seems to be countenanced from this text, 'Those who sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him;' as if the Apostle spake here of the souls of good men which had been asleep, and Christ should bring them with him to be united to their bodies, which should be raised; as likewise from the whole tenor of the Apostle's discourse about the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. where the Apostle says nothing of the living of the soul before the body be raised; as if the soul separated from the body were in a state of insensibility till the resurrection. But the true answer to this is, that neither our Saviour in his discourse of the resurrection, nor St. Paul in the fifteenth chapter of the 1st Corinthians, nor here in this text, do keep closely to the proving of the resurrection of the body; but of a blessed immortality after this life against the Sadducees, who said there was no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit. But sometimes they prove that there is a life after death; and sometimes that at the resurrection, the soul shall be joined in a spiritual and heavenly body, and that the whole man shall enjoy perfect bliss and happiness."

That the phrase *to sleep*, or *to be fallen asleep*, applies only to the body, and even that merely in a figurative sense, may be gathered from all the instances where it occurs. "*Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake;*"† and

\* The phrase seems also to indicate that the bodies of all true Christians who are dead, shall rise before the rest of the dead "to meet the Lord in the air," and have a priority over all the wicked in coming to life again.

† Dan. xii. 2.

surely sleeping in the dust of the earth, can only be applied to the body. More expressly yet, is the text St. Matt. xxvii. 52. "And the graves were opened; and many *bodies* of saints which slept, arose." Acts xiii. 36, 37. "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption." Now that of David which fell asleep, and was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption, was certainly his *body*; and that of our Saviour which was raised again, and saw no corruption, was likewise his *body*, according to that prediction concerning him, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," (*Hades*) by which is plainly meant the state and place of souls separated from the body; "nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption," that is, the body of our Lord was not to rest in the grave. 1 Cor. xv. 20. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept," that is, the resurrection of his body out of the grave, is an assurance that ours also shall be raised, and ver. 51. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," where the Apostle undoubtedly speaks of the death and change of these corruptible bodies. And so likewise the text is to be understood of the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, which shall be raised up by the sound of the great trumpet, and reunited to their souls, that they may in person accompany Christ at his coming. So that it is clearly *the body*, which is every where said in Scripture *to sleep*, and not *the soul*; and if so, then the only foundation for this opinion is taken away.

"In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the different states of good and bad men, immediately after their departure out of this life, are described; but they are so described, that it is evident the souls of neither of them are asleep."

Phil. i. 23. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." But if *to be with Christ*, is to be in a state of sleep and insensibility, how is that so much *better*, than to be in the body, serving God and his church? 2 Cor. v. 6. 8. "Therefore we

are always confident, knowing, that while we sojourn in the body, we ~~are~~ absent from the Lord : We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." But certainly, to be present with the Lord, which the Apostle here affirms that good men are, so soon as they depart out of the body, must needs signify a state of happiness, which *sleep* is not, but only of insensibility.\*

"Besides, that the Apostle's argument would be flat, and but a cold encouragement to Christians against the fears of death, that as soon as we are dead, we shall fall asleep and become insensible. But the Apostle useth it as an argument, why we should be willing to die as soon as God pleaseth, and the sooner the better ; because as soon as ever we quit these bodies, we shall be present with the Lord, that is, shall be admitted to the blissful sight and enjoyment of him, and that while *we abide in the body*, we are detained from our happiness. But if our souls sleep as well as our bodies, till the general resurrection, it is all one, whether we continue in the body or not, as to any happiness we shall enjoy in the mean time ; which is directly opposite to the main scope of the Apostle's argument.

1 Cor. xv. 51. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," that is, all shall not die, but at the coming of Christ many shall be found alive and changed.

1 Cor. xv. 20. "Christ is said to be risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Not that he was the first that was raised from the dead ; for Elijah and Elisha raised some, and so did our Saviour himself in his lifetime ; but the Apostle here alludes to the observances among the Jews relative to the first-fruits, which were a pledge and earnest of a future harvest. In like manner, the resurrection of Christ is called the first-fruits of them that slept, because it is an earnest of that general harvest, which shall be at the end of the world, when the angels, the reap-

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\* The soul, during sleep, may be very happy or very miserable and terrified in dreams, so it cannot be said to be then *insensible*, as Bishop Tillotson here takes for granted.

ers, shall come to gather the elect from the four winds.\* But the resurrection of others before Christ was no earnest of this, because they were raised, but Christ is said to rise from the dead by his own power. And in this sense he is truly said by St. John to be "the first-begotten of the dead." Rev. i. 5.†

Bishop Horsley, in his sermon explanatory of that text in St. Peter relative to our Lord's disembodied soul preaching to the spirits in prison, after proving that his descent into hell means an actual passage of his spirit from the place of his death to the visible mansions of *Hades*, where the spirits of the dead are confined until the last day, concludes by pointing out the great use of a belief in this article of the Creed:—"Its use is this,—that it is a clear confutation of the dismal notion of death as a temporary extinction of the life of the whole man; or what is no less gloomy and discouraging, the notion of the sleep of the soul in the interval between death and the resurrection. Christ was made so truly man, that whatever took place in his human nature may be considered as a model and example of what must take place, in a certain due proportion and degree in every man united to him. Christ's soul survived the death of the body; therefore shall the soul of every believer survive the body's death. Christ's disembodied soul descended into hell, thither, therefore, shall the soul of every believer in Christ descend. In that place, the soul of Christ, in its separate state, possessed and exercised active powers; in the same place, therefore, shall the believer's soul possess and exercise activity. • Christ's soul was not left in hell; neither shall the souls of his servants be left there but for a season. The appointed time will come, when the Redeemer shall set open the doors of their prison-house, and say to his redeemed—'Go forth.' "†

The meaning of the prophecy of our Saviour's soul not being to be left in hell, must be understood to imply, that

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\* Or from the four quarters of the world—all parts of the earth.

† Tillotson.

‡ Sermons, Vol. II. p. 192.

it would not be allowed, or rather, would not be *obliged* to remain there till the last day (as other souls are) but only for a very short time, and of its own free will. The souls of all as well as believers, go to one or other of the mansions in Hades, and *none* are to remain for ever in these abodes,—for the judgment removes all to their eternal residence, the scene of the promised great reward or punishment, and Hades itself, we are informed by Revelation, shall then be cast into the lake of fire.

King Hezekiah exclaims,—“Behold, for peace I had great bitterness : but thou hast in love to my soul (or more literally, *animal life*\*) delivered it from the pit of corruption : for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee ; death cannot celebrate thee : they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.”† *The Theological Review* observes on the above passage, that although the language does not very much resemble what we would expect from a devout and mature Christian of the present day,‡ yet to collect from it and such like passages that the prophets had absolutely no expectation whatever of a future state, is to infer that a man *must* be ignorant on a subject, because he says nothing about it under circumstances which might be expected to suggest some allusions to it. “Their expressions can amount to nothing more than this ; that when a man is dead, there is an end of all opportunity for his employment in the service of God, in this world, or for the visible display of providential mercy in his behalf. They are speaking, as Diodati observes, of the common course, according to which the dead return no more into the world to enjoy new benefits from God, or to give him any praise therefore in the church.”§

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\* In our translation of the Old Testament, the word *Soul* is in several places used where, in the original, it is plain that only the *life* of the body is meant.

† Isaiah xxxviii. 17, 18, 19.

‡ This opinion justifies the blame thrown on some passages already quoted from works of mature Christians of the present day.

§ Review, No. 17.

In the sixth Psalm, we find David saying—"In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" and in the hundred and forty-sixth Psalm, it is said—"His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." But here, as Bishop Horsley observes, the original Hebrew, instead of *thoughts*, means rather "his false deceitful show," literally, "*his glitterings*."—"Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth"?\*—and again—"Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?"†

The only way to explain some of these texts, *consistently with others in the same Book and by the same author*, is to interpret them to mean, that the Being of man as a complete creature may be said to be dead while his body is in the grave,—when his visible part, by which only he can communicate with this present world, is insensible, and when his soul is taken away to a distance from all that is done under the sun, at least by direct observance.

In Ecclesiastes‡ it is written:—"The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."—ver. 10. In the grave there is certainly none, and *there* lies that part of man which showed his bodily shape,—that which was the earthly organ of all his actions, of speech, sight, hearing, and all the other senses. The living forget the dead, and the place which knew *them* once remembers them no more. Without the body, the soul, as far as we know, cannot, at least in com-

\* Ps. xxx. 9.

† Ps. lxxxviii. 10, 11, 12.

‡ Chap. ix. 5, 6.

mon course, make itself heard or seen by mortal eyes ; and therefore, when the body dies, so falls (we may say) *the man*, for that which we saw of him, dead and senseless to all connexion with this world ; man, in short, after death, exists *nowhere as man*, for the parts necessarily to form a man are disjoined, and mortal life has left his body which has returned to dust ; but unless any one can bring himself to believe that the *immortal* soul (falsely called so in such a case) also lies in the grave, it would be needless to point out to him that these texts above mentioned can only have been intended to apply to the insensible mouldering body and its animal life alone.

Not only may the term *sleep* be applied figuratively to souls in a conscious state of separation, merely because they no longer mix with mortals in this world, and are removed from it altogether, but a much stronger expression is used in Scripture regarding men alive as we now are, when intending only to express in metaphor that they are abandoned to wickedness—lost to all goodness. The term *dead* is not always used in the New Testament when referring to a body deprived of life, or even insensible. “Let *the dead* bury their dead.”\*—“*Dead* while she liveth :”† “*dead* and is alive again,”‡ is in this instance immediately explained, to mean no more than that the person to whom it is applied, “was lost and is found.” “*Dead* in trespasses and sins”§ —“For ye are *dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”|| All these are similar modes of speaking. The term *death*, it will be seen, may in this sense be applied to the soul without meaning by it a state of insensibility, much more may the term *sleep* be so, without intending to imply that it is torpid and unconscious, for in sleep the soul is often, nay, as has been shown, probably always in a state of activity.

Life, in the same manner, is often taken in the Scriptures

\* Luke ix. 60.

† 1 Tim. v. 6.

‡ See the parable of the prodigal son, where the father uses this phrase twice.—St. Luke xv.

§ Ephes. ii. 1.

|| Coloss. iii. 3.

to signify a happy state, and death a miserable one of waking consciousness. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."\* Those to whom this was addressed, were not either literally sleeping or dead, and this text is an example of these terms being used in metaphoric language merely to express ignorance, sin, or a state of inactivity.

In a funeral sermon on the death of his predecessor, by the late lamented and learned American divine, Bishop Hobart of New York, the preacher thus expresses himself with regard to the sleep of the soul:—"The expression *sleep* or *sleeping*, so frequently applied in Scripture to the state of the dead, is evidently metaphorical; derived from the resemblance between a" (recently) "*dead* body, and the body of a person *asleep*. The body is said figuratively '*to sleep in the dust of the earth*,' expecting a resurrection on that day, when the dead, both the small and great, shall be summoned to stand before God.

"The comparison between the state of the dead and a state of sleep is beautiful and appropriate. Sleep is that relaxation from the toils and afflictions of life, that short suspension of the powers of corporeal sense and action which are succeeded by a more vigorous exercise of the animal and intellectual faculties. And so death, releasing us entirely from our conflict with the trials of this mortal existence, and suspending all the corporeal functions, is followed by a reviviscence of our whole nature, in the active delights and unalloyed glories of the heavenly state.

"The term sleep applied to the state of the dead, denotes not *unconsciousness*, but a freedom from the cares and labours of life; and, as it respects the righteous, expresses *comfortable enjoyment*, rest, security, and felicity. It is a phrase by which, in all languages, the state of the soul is denoted. And yet the popular belief among all nations, assigned consciousness and activity to the departed. The sleep of the soul after death, in that sense which supposes

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\* Ephes. v. 14.



it to be *unconscious*, is a modern invention, unknown to the ancient popular creed of both Jews and Heathens, repugnant to reason, and contradicted by Scripture.”

I shall here abridge some judicious observations on this subject, by Mr. Polwhele, from his Essay already referred to :—

“In opening the sacred volume, our curiosity will not be gratified in the inquiry where or what we shall be, if we expect plain intimations or exact descriptions. Yet Scripture hath revealed much in coincidence with the general sense and feeling of mankind—in terms sufficiently express and clear to discredit some prevailing theories, such, for instance, as the notion of the soul’s being for a while extinguished, or of its being suffered to drop into a temporary annihilation, and sufficiently express and clear to confute every argument in favour even of its sleep or insensibility.

“They who think that the soul can have no consciousness after death, (or in other words acquiesce in the melancholy idea of its extinction,) tell us our perceptions depend *on the organs of sense*. These, of course, perish with the body, and consequently, say they, the perceptions also. They insinuate that the soul was created for the body, and the body for the soul—that, as before our birth, the soul had no conscious subsistence,\* so, after death, it will retain none, and

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\* We should reflect that we have little grounds for deciding whether our souls existed in a prior state or not. Our *not remembering it* is no good reason for disbelieving it. Many things happen to us even in this world which we wholly forget—we look on scenes which fade completely from our recollections—our souls dream and forget their wanderings. The most singular instances of a double consciousness are related by Dr. Abercrombie, in his work on the Intellectual Powers. He has known persons subject to periodical states of insanity and soundness of mind, who forgot what had happened to them during one state when the other had come on, and yet again recollected when the same state returned. A lady subject to these changes, when under the influence of hallucination, used to regain her sound senses all of a sudden, on which she forgot every thing that had occurred when she was in sane, stopping in the middle of a sentence, and leaving off whatever she was doing—but resuming both exactly where she had left off upon the same state

that its consciousness and personality can only be restored at the moment of its reunion with the body. But surely the soul's activity—its energies, continued whilst the body is motionless in sleep,—should point out the improbability of its annihilation whilst the body is motionless in death. Its independence on the corporeal frame should seem to result from its very nature and essence.

“The main argument with others which would throw the soul into sleep, is deduced from the premises which we in common acknowledge. In the present life, it has been insisted on, we are placed in a state of probation, to be judged hereafter for the things done in the body. On the dissolution of the union between the soul and body, a period is put to this moral responsibility. All the moral action, therefore, is superfluous ; or, hardly practicable where the tests of virtue are no more —, hath necessarily ceased. And moral energies are scarcely conceivable without moral action : nor intellectual without moral. From this suspense, therefore, of its faculties and affections, the inference is, that the soul must sink into a state of insensibility.

“With respect to this reasoning, I must observe, that although, with the termination of a life of trial, all moral accountability must have an end, and consequently all moral action, yet it by no means follows that all moral energies must cease,—much less intellectual. That neither moral nor intellectual energies can exist without moral action, as involving moral responsibility, is, doubtless, a gratuitous assumption.”

Here it may be farther remarked in illustration of this ar-

mind returning. It is common also to forget what has been said or done when the mind is deranged by drinking. Dr. A. relates the case of a porter who left a parcel at a wrong house when he was drunk, and wholly forgot where upon becoming sober, but on again getting drunk, he went at once to the place. So in a similar manner, if our souls existed in a prior or different state from what they do at present, they might naturally forget every thing relative to it on entering into this world, but we must not run the similitude so close as to infer that what is done here shall be forgotten in a future stage of our existence, for we know that this would not hold good.

gument by Mr. Polwhele, that although moral accountability, or even a power of farther doing either well or ill, were to cease altogether in the separate state of souls, as is more than probable, it would be no more a cause why the soul itself should become insensible, than that a man on earth should fall asleep after he was taken and confined from farther activity or power to commit good or evil actions, and that he should never waken till he was released out of prison.

The Rev. Frederick Ricketts\* has, in an able pamphlet, exposed the fallacious reasonings in the work of the *Country Pastor* before noticed, and from the good sense and learning displayed in the refutation, his little work cannot fail of meeting the attention it merits. I have already quoted Mr. Ricketts' opinion on the importance of the question, and would value very little the sentiments of those who disagree with him on this preliminary point, which is too apparent to be seriously disputed or despised by any one who thinks on what shall become of him after this life.

"The sacred Writers," says Mr. R. "use the expression *sleep* in reference to the dead, loosely and generally—sleep and sleeping, for death and dying. I say *loosely*, because no instance of its use occurs, where the writer has any discoverable intention of establishing an interesting doctrine. In its use, no instance occurs where the context carries its meaning beyond the final point of *action* in this world—Death."—"And the Lord said unto Moses,† 'Behold, *thou shalt sleep* with thy fathers; and this people shall rise up,' &c. Here the expression 'sleep' is used only two verses after the expression 'die,' on the self same occasion—for the self same reason—with the self same scope of context—and evidently therefore in the self same sense. It is here an evident synonym, meaning neither more nor less than to die in the sense of simply ceasing to live on earth. And

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\* Rector of Eckington, and Domestic Chaplain to the Earl of Liverpool.

† Deut. xxxi. 16.

why a more recondite meaning should be given to it than to other similar synonyms, I cannot see. It is said of this same Moses, that he should be 'gathered unto his people,' as was Aaron.\* Now we know that neither of them was actually entombed in the burying place of their ancestors—but the one in the wilderness of Zin, and the other in a valley in the land of Moab. This expression, therefore, cannot be taken literally, but figuratively—as a synonym for death. And that the expression *sleep* must, in like manner, be taken figuratively, may be proved from the very instance in the New Testament adduced to establish the contrary. The Country Pastor refers to the use of this word by our Saviour, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth—but I go to awake him out of his sleep.'—That it was, however, used by him figuratively, the context itself will show. Jesus said, 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth\*—then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well: Howbeit,' says St. John, 'Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them PLAINLY, Lazarus is dead.' It appears that the disciples had mistaken his meaning. And the Lord used a *plain* and direct word, in explanation of one which must therefore by inference be considered as figurative. Had he, in the use of the original word intended to represent, not figuratively, the simple fact of death, but *plainly* the condition of the soul after death, surely his *explanation* would have been different. And the historian would not have put his first expression, which referred to sleep, in *opposition* to the word '*plainly*,'

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\* Our Lord seems to have used this expression only in some sort of banter, in the same way as he did in the case of Jairus' daughter; when those who heard him, "laughed him to scorn," as they were confident the maid was dead; consequently, they could not afterwards allege that she had only been sleeping, or in a trance; in order, by such an assertion, to lessen the miracle in the eyes of the multitude. Christ always took care that the facts of his miracles should be established in a very marked manner, as, for another example, when he lingered on the road, after hearing of Lazarus' death, until the body was even corrupting, and death, therefore, most apparent.

which he *connected* with the second expression, which referred to death."

"If it be asked, however, why that particular expression should be in general use as a synonym for dying, I think it a sufficiently satisfactory answer to say that it is one which lightens the idea of death, by pointing to an awakening or *resurrection*. Nay, that *this* is the idea involved in the use of the word sleep, and not that of the condition of the soul during the intermediate state, may be gathered from the very instance from St. Paul adduced in support of the opposite argument. 'For if we believe that Jesus died and *rose again*, even so them *also* which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.' Here again we are to learn the sense of the obscurer expressions, from their connexion with those whose meaning is not dubious—the dying and rising again of Jesus, is to regulate the notion of the sleeping and awakening of those whom 'God will bring with him.' "\*

In the Revelation of St. John, the departed souls of the saints are represented as conscious and addressing God, when their brethren were on earth in this life. Now, if it shall be said, as the *Country Pastor* supposes, that the allusion is to the time of their final reward, we should be careful that we do not consider any thing as an emblem, unless we can assign the idea of which it is emblematic. We at once perceive the ideas of which "the Lion of the tribe of *Judah*,"—"the Root of David,"—"the Lamb of God" are emblems. We understand the figures under which Conquest and Strife, Justice, and peaceful Commerce and Death are represented in the other Seals. But of what are the *conscious souls* of the martyrs emblematic? *Conscious* souls cannot be emblematic of *unconscious* souls. Disembodied souls cannot be emblematic of souls embodied. The place from which they are made to cry—their address itself—and the answer may be *supposititious circumstances*, but how are we to get over the representation of their consciousness.

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\* Considerations on the condition of the soul in the intermediate state, &c. London. 1831.

The period referred to is one evidently subsequent to the death of the martyrs themselves, and before their resurrection. The main difficulty of the interpretation arises from the very circumstance of considering the consciousness of these souls as supposititious. It is impossible to frame a conjecture why they should be here represented as conscious, if the fact be that disembodied souls are insensible. "The location of the disembodied souls under God's altar, the distribution of white robes to them, and the answer given to them that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow-servants, &c. should be fulfilled, are emblematic of the facts that these souls, having been acceptable to God, not only live under his immediate keeping, but 'rest in hope,' until 'the number of the elect shall be accomplished.' " \*

That divine revelation would have so often represented departed souls as in a state of complete consciousness, *while their brethren and others were alive on the earth*, if it is impossible from their nature that they could be so, is, beyond all dispute, in the highest degree improbable; yet it must be imagined by every one who thinks the soul becomes insensible on the death of the body, that such revelations were wholly unfounded in reality, and are calculated to mislead!

In reviewing "*Scriptural Revelations concerning a Future State*," *The Theological Review* makes the following observations:—

"The phraseology and imagery of Scripture is throughout popular, and not technically and scientifically precise. Philosophically considered, it may be incorrect to speak of the *sleep of the body*. But the Apostles did not consider the matter philosophically. They adopted a familiar phrase used purely to indicate the cessation of the vital functions, and the *end of earthly troubles*; and it is so used, in spite of subsequent dissolution—(which in strictness, negatives

all idea of mere bodily sleep,) for the imagination does not always follow the mortal reliques into the sepulchre. There is nothing—absolutely nothing—in this form of speech to warrant any doubt upon the question; nothing which can weigh as a grain of sand against passages or phrases, which tend to the establishment of an intermediate state of activity and consciousness.

“But then,—\* the Apostle Paul, in comforting the Thesalonians concerning their deceased brethren, makes no mention of their being in a state of enjoyment, but alludes only to the joyful resurrection which awaited them; whereas, ‘if he had known, and had been authorised to reveal, that these persons were, *at that very time*, actually admitted to a state of happiness, one cannot but suppose that he would have mentioned this as an additional consolation,’ &c.—There is, perhaps, at first sight, something more in this argument than in the other; but in truth, it is but very little! The Apostle says, ‘*I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have been laid asleep*’; or, in other words, those who have undergone that change which is usually and conventionally indicated by the term *falling asleep*. And, again—‘*We which are alive (or living upon earth) shall not prevent† those who have long ago been laid asleep*.’ In each instance, indeed, our translation renders the original by the words—*which are asleep*; and this might seem so intimate that St. Paul considered the deceased, as at that moment in a state of continued slumber or unconsciousness. But the original itself indicates nothing of the kind. It points simply to the fact, that the persons of whom he was speaking had sunk to rest, probably without any reference, either one way or another, to that which would immediately follow their repose from the troubles of this life. Besides, what, after all, is the grand consolation which Christianity offers to the survivors of the righteous? Is it not the weight of glory which is *finally* reserved for them

\* The Review here quotes from the work it is considering.

† Or, precede.

that fall asleep in the faith? Is it not the joyful resurrection which awaits them, and their blissful admission to the presence of God? Compared with this prospect, the peace or the hope of the intermediate state would be as nothing, and might well be omitted by a teacher intent on supporting his followers by the most powerful of all consolations."—"According to our view of the matter, then, the Scriptural expressions, which speak of the dead as having fallen asleep, do not, by necessity, imply that the interval which follows death is a state of unconsciousness."\*

It is clear from many passages, that the Apostles believed the resurrection and judgment not far distant, and they seemed to have no idea it would not arrive for more than eighteen hundred years; but this is not to be wondered at, when their master declared that even he himself knew not the time.† Here then is an additional reason why they did not hold out the pleasures which the souls of the just shall enjoy in their separate state, as the reward of their faith. They naturally spoke of those which are to be eternal, rather than of what might last but a day, or for a very short time. When earthly laws denounce punishment for crimes, they only allude to what is to follow trial and sentence, not to a lenient or harsh confinement previously to standing at the bar of judgment, which imprisonment may be longer or shorter according to circumstances. In like manner, when souls are merely in safe custody, waiting for the second coming of Christ as their judge, those who expected him soon, would think little of their state in the interval, in comparison with what was to follow.

When St. Stephen saw the heavenly vision just before his

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\* Theological Review, No. 17, for Jan. 1831.

† It should be noticed, however, that Christ evidently must have frequently alluded to the great but temporal and earthly judgment which was to befall the Jewish nation in the siege of their capital city by Titus, which came to pass before some who had heard the denunciations had died. This dreadful event is often spoken of as a type of the great judgment on all the human race at the end of the world.



death,\* and prayed to God to receive his spirit, he could have had no apprehension of sinking into a torpor, insensible alike to the things of earth or the state of the dead. We are told, "*he fell asleep*," but nothing can more glaringly expose the error that insists on the unconscious slumbers of the soul, than this opposition of all the corporeal senses thus dropping into the gloom of the grave, and of the etherial spirit thus ascending, and longing to be received into the realms of light and life ! The immediate admission into at least some degree of happiness of which he expresses his sanguine hope—his perfect confidence, must furnish a strong presumption of the soul's sensibility uninterrupted by the death of the body.

Another strong passage indicating that the sleep at death does not mean an insensible one, or that the expression must not be taken literally, will be found at 1 Thess. v. 10. "Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should *live* together with him." *Sleep*, in this verse, can neither signify natural sleep, as in ver. 7, nor spiritual sloth, as in ver. 6 ; therefore it must signify *death* here. Now, they who are *asleep* in Christ in this sense, do still "*LIVE* together with him" in their souls, and shall *live* with him in their bodies also when raised from the dead. It were strange that we should be alive, and live with Christ, and yet do no act of life. The body when it sleeps can do many ; and if the soul does none, the principal is less active than the instrument. But if it does any at all in separation, it must be an act or effect of understanding ; there seems nothing else it can do ; but this it can. It is but a weak proposition to affirm that the soul can do nothing of itself without the assistance of the body. To be or to sleep with Christ, signifies no more than that our souls are received by him into his joyful and safe custody and care ; to rest and repose in a delightful state of serenity till Hades shall deliver up all the souls which are in it, that they may go and rejoin their changed bodies, and in these be judged,—which does not,

however, imply that our spirits go *immediately* to heaven. This exposition will be seen to arise almost to a certainty of evidence of the soul living and waking in death.

The Apostle to the Hebrews recommends to his disciples, diligence in their Christian vocation, by the following argument :—"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, *inherit* the promises." To what does this persuasion amount, if the Apostle knew, that they, who had gone before them in the race of immortality, were fast bound in the chains of a deep sleep, in which they were as unconscious of their own existence, and of the lapse of time, as was the dust into which their bodies were mouldered? Can a person in a state of utter insensibility, and unconscious of his own existence, *inherit promises*?

"When inaction, or a cessation from action," says Dr. Burnet, "is attributed to the souls of the dead, we are not to understand a total or an universal inaction only; because they have no operation, or action, which regards the corporeal world, nor are they affected by that any manner whatsoever. But still they have life and the faculty of thinking remaining: for so I understand the words of Christ, when, to prove the immortality of the soul, he says that God calls himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. But he is not the God of the dead, *but of the living*, for they all live unto him. By the *dead* here, Christ clearly seems to have meant those who are void of all life whatever; and in this sense he denies that these Patriarchs are dead. *For they live*, says he, *unto God*; that is, if I understand the thing rightly, though they do not live with regard to men, and the rest of the visible world, yet with regard to God, *in the middle world*, according to their intellectual faculties, they enjoy both life and vigour."\*

There is a sublime passage in Isaiah, where the dead kings and princes are described as coming forth to meet the

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\* Burnet. "*De statu mortuorum*," (translated in the text.)

spirit of the King of Babylon, and insulting over him, saying—"Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?"\* The place where they are represented to be in, is called in the Hebrew *Sheol*, which term was applied to the region of departed spirits generally. "*Sheol* (or *Hades*) from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.† And they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou become like unto us?—How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" Meaning, merely, in the latter part, metaphorically to express the greatness of his fall.

The Rev. Principal Campbell interprets Scripture, as informing us in the above passage, that—"in '*Hades*,' all the monarchs and nobles, not of one family or race, but of the whole earth are assembled. Yet their sepulchres are as distant from one another as the nations they governed. Those mighty dead are raised, not from their *couches*, which would have been the natural expression, had the Prophet's idea been a sepulchral vault, how magnificent soever, but *from their thrones*, as suited the notion of all antiquity, concerning not the bodies, but the shades or ghosts of the departed, to which were always assigned something similar in rank and occupation to what they had possessed upon the earth. Nay, as is well observed by Castalio,‡ those are represented in *Hades*, whose carcasses were denied the honour of sepulture. In this particular, the opinions of the Hebrews did not coincide with those of the Greeks and Romans."§

Ezekiel says that the king of Egypt, with his people, should fall by the sword, and descend into hell, (*sheol*,) into the place, that is to say, of the dead, of departed spirits: and that other princes who had been cut off in war should

\* Chap. xiv.

† Or from their places; all those who were rulers upon earth in their life times.

‡ *Defensio adv. Bezam. Adversarii Errorcs.*

§ Campbell's Diss. VI. Part II.

come about him and speak to him, and that he should be comforted with the consideration that he had so many companions who had shared the same fate.\*

Now, though even in a parable or poetic fiction, if these can be called so, every part is not to be urged as literally true, yet such representations as the above, fairly imply, that it was at least a common opinion, that the souls of the dead went to some common receptacle, and continued to be and to act, and were neither destroyed nor senseless. We have no good reason, however, for believing that these prophets intended what is here taken from their writings as mere parables or fictions, and it is much more likely that they meant what they said as true and real.

Referring to these passages from Isaiah and Ezekiel, Bishop Hobart affirms that there is no doubt, *sheol* signifies *the place of the departed*. The latter prophet, he says, represents "the strong among the mighty," as speaking to the king of Egypt "out of the midst of hell," in the above sense of that word. The elder Lowth, in his *Commentary*, considers the whole passage as "a poetical description of *the infernal regions*, where the ghosts of deceased tyrants, with their subjects, are represented as coming to meet the king of Egypt, and his auxiliaries, upon their arrival at the same place. *Hell* signifies here *the state of the dead*."

"Thus, then," as Dr. Magee observes, "in like manner, as Homer, in his *Odyssey*, sends the souls of the slaughtered wooers to *Hades*, where they meet with the *manes* of Achilles, Agamemnon, and other heroes; so the Hebrew poet, in this passage of inimitable grandeur, describes the king of Babylon, when slain and brought to the grave, as entering *Sheol*, and there meeting the *Rephaim*, or manes of the dead, who had descended thither before him, and who are poetically represented as rising from their seats at his approach. And as, on the one hand, the passage in the Grecian band has been always held, without any question, to be demonstrative of the existence of a popular belief

among the Greeks, that there was a place called *Hades*, which was the receptacle for departed souls : so this poetic image of Isaiah must be allowed, upon the other, to indicate, in like manner, among the Jews, the existence of a popular belief that there was a region for departed souls called *Sheol*, in which the *Rephaim* or manes took up their abode."

Isaiah says, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart ; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace."\* The *death* of the righteous, (for, in the original, "*perisheth*" means nothing more,) is here represented, not as an evil, but *as a favour*. Some will perhaps reply that it is better to be dead than to be in anxiety and pain. A poor recompence this would be, and slender comfort, indeed, to the people of God.

St. Paul could not possibly have expected, when he wished to depart, merely to sink into forgetfulness, which could not be better to him than life on earth, and *a gain*, as he expressed it. The meaning of the Greek word *αναλυσαι*, which we translate *to depart*, clearly expresses his belief to be that his spirit could leave his body and be happy, which is shown by the words immediately following. "Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Had this courageous Apostle felt so oppressed at the troubles he met with during the course of his ministry as to wish to exchange life for a state of nothingness, as it were,—if he had imagined death would lay him for an indefinite time into a state of torpidity, only to be shaken off at the last day, his ardent wish to die, would have been the preference of utter despair, a complete sinking under the conflict of his sufferings. This cannot be denied ; now, was he so reduced in spirit ? Had his heart entirely failed him ? By no means : hear himself on the subject.—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; we are perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed."

—And he adds—but “*we faint not* ; for though our outward man perishes, *our inward man*” (of course, meaning *his soul*) “*is renewed*” (or supported more and more) “*day by day.*” In other words—However oppressed our bodies be, yet our spirits are strengthened to meet our troubles. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”\* Such is *not* the language of despair, which would prefer the dissolution of the body, and the sleep of the soul, to remaining alive ; but if he thought that the hour he died would bring his soul into a blissful region where he would have the pleasure of again seeing and conversing with our Lord, he was very excusable for preferring it, and wishing for the time when he should enter it. His wishing himself dead, *while the rest of his brethren remained alive*, was very different from wishing the time to arrive when all good men should partake of bliss together. He is clearly solicitous to be there *sooner* than others, which, he must have been very sensible, could not have been, if he was not to enjoy it till the last day. He had hoped to join the innumerable company of angels, and the first-fruits of the Christian scheme in paradise, or, as they are called in Scripture, “the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven,” and “the *spirits* of just men made perfect ;”† these, in some way unknown to us, may enjoy the more visible presence or vision of God, who may render himself visible to them, as he often did of old to men on earth, even before his appearance on it as “the Christ of God.” The first martyr Stephen, while yet alive here, saw our Lord sitting at the right hand of the Father ; and the spirit of Christ, too, is frequently said in figurative language to dwell in his worshippers while in this world, when they seek him in spirit and in truth ; so it does not follow, that the spirits of the departed saints are already in the scene of their eternal reward—the highest heavens.

If St. Paul had the same notions as the advocates for the

\* See 2 Cor. iv.

† Heb. xii. 22.

sleep of the soul endeavour to explain, he must have known that such a fancy would, of course, be a complete delusion; and that a deception which would lead him to think some thousand years, or at least an indefinite time, to be a moment, would be very different from being conscious immediately after death. His feelings when he was alive in his body, and beforehand, of such a state of nothingness or torpidity, would be very different from what they would be if that state was past, and he had actually just risen from his grave at the last day. No living person could be supposed, consistently with common sense, to be anxious to enter on a long sleep of insensibility (unless in the most extreme despair,) whatever his feelings might be anticipated to be on awakening.

If there be meaning in words, we are taught in all the passages now appealed to, that the souls of men as soon as death sets them free from the body, pass into a state of a pleasing and conscious repose from their labours, or into one where their evil deeds are remembered with an agitated and fearful looking for of judgment. The meaning attributed to the sacred writers by the soul sleepers must be acknowledged to be exceedingly remote from the use of language, and far from what any man who has not a favourite dogma to support would naturally discover from the words. Can we believe, then, that the inspired authors meant, by the help of equivocal expressions, to flatter their disciples with the hope of entering, the instant they expire, on a state of bliss, when in reality they knew that their souls must sleep in the dust or somewhere else insensibly for ages? The metaphysical subtleties which are brought forward to support these strange opinions are completely overthrown alike by the investigations of the learned and by common sense.

Judging, now, therefore, from a careful consideration of Holy Writ, the similitude of *sleep* can only apply to the principle of animal life, which slumbers as it were for a while, and is metaphorically said to do so, merely because it ceases for a while to exert its powers, and will again revive.

As during sleep, the immortal principle is often felt or

remembered to be active and vigilant, and *may* be always so, although without our recollection, so during the long night of death which the body experiences, the soul, freed from the body, is ever active in Hades, where all disembodied spirits reside, until summoned by the last trumpet to rejoin their former habitations, then mysteriously changed in their nature so as to last for ever.

Many writers seem to have thought, that the fact of the soul's continuing to live after the death of the body is so clearly established, and rests on such incontrovertible grounds, that they often take it for granted, rather than think it necessary to attempt to prove it. Thus Sherlock, in his "*Practical Discourse concerning Death*," where we might have looked for a separate disquisition on the subject, says only this, which, however, plainly enough declares his opinion, on which, in fact, he grounds his work :—"When we die, we do not fall into nothing, or into a profound sleep, into a state of silence and insensibility till the resurrection ; but we only change our place and our dwelling ; we remove out of this world, and leave our bodies to sleep in the earth till the resurrection, but our souls and spirits live still in an invisible state. I shall not go about to prove these things, but take it for granted, that you all believe them ; for, that we leave this world, and that our bodies rot and putrify in the grave, needs no proof ; and that our souls cannot die, but are by nature immortal, has been the belief of all mankind."\*

Can then the generally received belief of all nations from the remotest antiquity be considered founded on entire error ? and can it be said to be more probable that the soul does sleep insensibly after death, because a few, who aim at being thought more learned and wise than the bulk of their fellow-men, seek out and endeavour to teach improbable theories or reasons for inducing us to adopt such a belief, founding on far fetched interpretations of particular texts of Scripture, or not attending to the obvious meaning of the

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\* Chap. i. 1.



Writers, as appearing from other passages, and their common use of metaphor? Can those who believe it to be impossible that the soul survives its earthly house, explain in a direct and rational manner, our Saviour's assertion that God could not be called the God of the dead or of the insensible, but of the *living* Abraham, whom he yet affirmed to be in a conscious state at the time when he was speaking? Was the appearance of Moses at the transfiguration mere delusion, from its not being possible that his soul, in the common course of nature, could be active and conscious, or able to hold converse? Was the parable of Dives and Lazarus mere fable from the impossibility of its being founded on reality, and though given as a moral lesson by One whose greatest attribute is Truth? Was the reality of some similar case (if this parable itself was not intended to allude to two certain individuals) not meant to be believed by those to whom it was addressed, and who actually had such an idea current among them, and when without such a belief in what was said, no moral effect could have been produced as was evidently intended? Was our Lord's promise to the robber delusive, or not meant in the only sense in which it has been shown that he must have taken it? Is the soul of the accepted Abel still unconscious of the arm mighty to save and to reward, as in the moment when he was struck to the ground, and consequently, has the love of the Almighty not done him so much good for even five thousand years, as his brother's envy did him harm? Is the soul, in short, no more immortal than the body, and does it sleep in the grave or in some other place?

Let those who believe in the soul's slumber, answer these questions, and explain them in a convincing manner in conformity with their theory, before they continue any longer to uphold it as borne out by Scripture. Let them prove from physiological facts that soul and body are indissolubly connected, both dying together, or sleeping insensibly till the resurrection, and show undeniably by some other evidence than that uncertain one *the memory*, that the soul, while in a living body, ever becomes unconscious of life and thought,

before they argue from thence that the spirit of a man can even in a mortal body sink into a state of temporary oblivion. If they do all this, we may believe them, but they must at the same time overthrow all contrary evidence, and then only they can hope to convince the man who chooses to investigate and impartially to decide from the evidence he has collected, and from the words of inspiration in their most obvious meanings.

Founding on the passages of Scripture now quoted, and from understanding them to clearly indicate that consciousness in the soul is not interrupted by death, the Roman Church maintains it in her services, and founds some of her most important doctrines upon it. At the Reformation it was considered by Protestants so fully established by the gospel of our Lord and his Apostles, that the Church of England adopted it in its fullest extent, rejecting entirely the fanciful doctrine of the insensible sleep of the soul when in its separate state. In her funeral service, the distinction between the soul and body is plainly intimated, and that the one is taken away from its mortal tenement of clay, while the latter is laid in the earth, returning to dust. The thanksgiving in this beautiful service begins thus:—"Almighty God, with whom *do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord*, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, *are in joy and felicity.*"

The Church of Scotland also agrees explicitly with this plain doctrine of Holy Writ. In the thirty-second chapter of her Confession of Faith, which treats "*of the state of man after death, and of the resurrection of the dead*," we find it thus stated:—"The bodies of men, after death, return to dust and see corruption, but their souls (*which neither die nor sleep*) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them."\* It is then said *where Pres-*

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\* A late very learned and worthy teacher of divinity of this church, thus expresses his opinion on the above point:—"Though there is *rest for the*

Byterians believe departed spirits pass their disembodied state, but this is a different question, and shall be treated of in the following chapter.

Whenever the labours of this life, therefore, are over, when our trials are at an end, and death shuts us out, in all probability for ever from the world we now move in, "*the rest*" which we are informed "remaineth for the people of God," is not one of insensibility, but of delightful repose, peace, and refreshment—a looking back with pleasure on the many cares which have ended in such unruffled ease; like the transition of delight experienced when, after a long rough voyage on a stormy sea, overshadowed with dark clouds, we at last waken from a troubled sleep, and find ourselves in a smooth bright harbour, with a certainty that we shall never be obliged to tempt the ocean of wild waters and misfortune more. In the paradise of the middle state, our souls shall be not only happy in their disembodied condition, but may have reason to hope that their delights must be greatly increased, when the spirit is united to a glorified body at the resurrection,—and that they themselves shall then be admitted into the heaven of their everlasting reward.

Deem we that silent are the dead,  
Because we do not hear  
Their voices where their souls are led,  
When from their dwellings clear!

Or can the soul feel pain or bliss,  
Remembering former days;  
And yet unable to express  
Its thoughts in other ways

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people of God, though those who die in the Lord, enjoy a repose rendered more sweet and refreshing by their preceding labours and fatigues; yet, this is not the sleep of insensibility, or the silence of an eternal grave."

Principal Brown's Sermon on the death of Principal Campbell.

If it is not the sleep of insensibility, then it is not the silence of even a temporary grave,—which, indeed, seems to be the meaning of the preacher.

Than those on earth we now must use,  
Our hopes and fears to tell ?  
Does silence its dread chill diffuse,  
Where spirits now must dwell ?

This world's vain din they've left for aye,  
But are a WAKEFUL band,  
Who rest from toil where brighter day,  
Shines than on earthly land.

O may we with delighted flight,  
Meet in their resting bowers,  
When death removes us from the sight,  
Of earth's fast fading flowers !

And since full certain is the doom  
That takes man's life away,  
Let Faith direct us through the gloom,  
With her enlight'ning ray.

With regard to the Christian believer who has undergone the change produced by death, we ought never to inscribe on the tombstone which marks the spot where his mortal remains mix with the earth, that *he* is sleeping there, or talk of the gloom of the grave ; and, as sleep does not overwhelm the conscious faculty of man, let us engrave on the sepulchral monument of the true Christian :—

—————“Though here his ashes lie,—  
To brighter realms his gentle spirit soar'd.”

Or some such epitaph as the following, which the living, as they read, may be consoled for their friend, while the concluding lines may be productive of salutary warning to themselves. Surrounded by the graves of the dead, and particularly when standing at the tomb of one we knew, the vanity of all earthly things is proved most forcibly to our minds, and solemn advice comes with far greater effect than when no sign of death meets our eyes ; although the extreme uncertainty of life is a truth known to every one, yet it cannot be too often brought to the remembrance of the living, for nothing is more readily forgotten, and, although each man

seems perfectly aware that all others are mortal, it is a fact which few appear to think is also *their own* sure doom.

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Though here his mortal body lies,  
 His soul lives yet and never dies.  
 It sleeps not in this cold dark bed ;  
 But, freed by death, hope ye it fled  
 To that far distant shore of rest,  
 Where spirits trust to be more blest ;  
 With joy they feel their cares are o'er,  
 And pain and death they dread no more.  
 There deep in grief far off is seen,  
 (With vast and awful gulf between,)  
 The careless sinner's hopeless state,  
 Who mourns unceasing o'er his fate,  
 Awaiting there his certain doom,  
 When the dread day shall burst the gloom.

Then ye who stop to read this rhyme,  
 Now make the best use of your time ;  
 To-morrow ye may never see ;—  
 To-night ye with the dead may be !

## CHAPTER V.

Proofs from the Scriptures that the departed souls of men have not as yet entered into heaven or hell ; if by these terms are understood the places of our eternal reward or punishment.

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“ No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven.” \*  
ST. JOHN iii. 13.

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IN common language, when *Heaven* is spoken of, that place is alone referred to, where the righteous are to remain in divine happiness *throughout eternity* ; and it is therefore the great and laudable end of our ambition, and of all our Christian efforts. It is also the scene of our reward after the soul shall be reunited to a body, when we shall enter it as perfect creatures, rendered glorious in our frames, and susceptible of enjoying, *in both parts of our nature*, the pleasures which are there prepared for us. If there be an intermediate state of the soul between life on earth and our entrance into heaven, its duration is uncertain, and may last but a day, for no one can say how near the great and terrible day of account may be, when the Judge shall sit in judgment ; ~~but~~ although the pleasures of heaven are the principal object and aim of good men, yet a state ought not to be overlooked as unworthy

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\* Or rather, as translated by Dr. Campbell,—“ For none ascendeth into heaven, but he who descended from heaven ; the Son of Man, whose abode is in heaven :” meaning, none shall do so in natural course ~~until~~ the resurrection, or had done so at the time ~~this~~ was said.

of consideration, which may last for ten thousand years, for any thing we can tell to the contrary, if there be such a one as is now alluded to. When our thoughts are directed to a better country after this life is over, they should naturally contemplate in the first place, that region into which the separate soul enters to remain until the judgment of the last day, unless they believe, as many do, that our souls are at once admitted into heaven, or thrust into hell, a belief totally unfounded in Scripture, and arising principally from confounding that *paradise*, into which the Jews believed every righteous soul on its leaving the body was received into a state of rest from its labours, with the *highest heavens*, where, after the judgment of the last day, the accepted are to be invited to enter, to live there for ever.

In the New Testament there is often reference to an unseen place for the souls of the just, where they are said at present to dwell in a peaceful happiness, and it indifferently receives the name of *Paradise* or *Abraham's bosom*. Within view of this place there is another of a very different nature, for the custody of wicked spirits, named *Tartarus*,\* which our translators render *hell*, and this English word we now commonly understand to mean the place of eternal torment, but which last, the Jews designated by a very different name, and never used them indiscriminately in the sense we do, for in the original Greek of the Scriptures the distinction is strictly preserved. Both *Paradise* and *Tartarus* are there described as in one general place or region called *Hades*, which we also translate *hell*, but the original word indicates nothing more than an invisible place, and one of safe custody. Both the states in it are referred to in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, and the two terms used to denote the places of *eternal* happiness and misery are quite distinct and different from those employed to name the places where, for a limited time, separate souls experience pleasure or pain. Our Lord was a Jew while on earth, his disciples and Apostles were so likewise, and they

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\* The word *Tartarus* is not itself used by the writers of the New Testament, but we have the verb derived from it, *ταρτάσας*, (*tartarosas*) as in 2 Pet. ii. 4.

spoke of that nation, of course, with a view to be understood; now, we ought, therefore, to know for certain what *the Jews* meant by *paradise*, before we can insist that they had the same meaning as is now commonly given to it; but this is a question generally lost sight of.

“Paradise among the Jews,” says Bishop Bull, “primarily signified *Gan Eden*, the garden of Eden, that blessed garden, wherein Adam, in his state of innocence, dwelt. By which, because it was a most pleasant and delightful place, they were wont *symbolically* to represent the place and state of good souls separated from their bodies, and waiting for the resurrection.”—“For they distinguished *Paradise* from the *Third Heaven*, as St. Paul also (being bred up in the Jewish literature) seems to do, where he speaks of several visions and revelations that he had received, one in the third heaven and another in *Paradise*.\* Hence it was the solemn good wish of the Jews (as the learned tell us from the Talmudists) concerning a dead friend, Let his soul be in the garden of Eden, or, Let his soul be gathered into the garden of Eden.† And in their solemn prayers for a dying person they used to say, Let him have his portion in paradise, and *also* in the world to come. In which form, paradise and the world to come are plainly distinguished. According to which notion, the meaning of our Saviour in this promise to the thief ‡ is evidently this, that he should presently after his death enter with him into that place of bliss and happiness where the souls of the righteous, separated from their bodies, inhabit, and where they wait in a joyful expectation of the resurrection, and the consummation of their bliss in the highest heaven. For, that our Lord here did not promise the thief an immediate entrance into that *heaven*, the ancients gathered from hence, that he himself,

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\* 2 Cor. xii. Whether St. Paul meant that the Revelation was made to himself or to another who related it to him, it is clear that he distinguishes paradise from heaven.

† See also Grotius in his Notes on Luke xxiii. 43.

‡ The word in the original more properly signifies *robber*.



as man, did not ascend thither till after his resurrection."\* The person to whom our Lord spoke was a Jew, and speaking in kindness to him, Christ must have intended to be understood by him; and he had no long time to study for the sense of it, or consult the critics in order to find such meanings as some of them have twisted the words into, in order to make them agree, by considerable ingenuity and tortuosity, with their doctrine of the sleep of the soul. The meaning of the promise, therefore, depends entirely on the notion of the ancient Jews concerning paradise and the beings which inhabit it.

That the place which the Jews designated Abraham's Bosom, was not understood by them to be heaven, or at least, what they called *the Third heaven*, or the region where the blest are to reside for ever, will soon appear manifest to every biblical scholar who will take the pains of investigating the question; and he will find that they meant by it a *Middle State*. Indeed, no other view of it will consistently explain many passages in both the Old and the New Testaments. It would have been extraordinary if they had so termed a region where the throne of God is believed to be established, where His presence is more immediately manifested, and the highest of the heavenly host move in visible glory; but still more astonishing would it have been, if, when our Saviour made use of that designation, he had meant the place where his Father manifested the glory of his power in the greatest degree, and distinguished it only by a term that would seem to imply, that Abraham was the principal person in it. There is something even approaching to impiety in the idea of calling the sanctuary of the Almighty, where he has promised ultimately to receive his saints, by the name of any individual soul of a mere man from the earth, however great and excellent we had considered him; but Abraham being the then head of the faithful in a separate region for their own residence while in a temporary or disembodied state, the term is a very natural and proper one.

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\* Sermon on the Doctrine of the Middle State.

The Hebrews acknowledged three heavens : 1st, The aerial heaven, where the birds fly, the winds blow, and the rain is formed. *The birds of heaven*, are the birds which fly in the air : *the waters of heaven*, and *the cataracts of heaven*, are the rain-waters which come from the clouds, (seldom above a mile or two from the surface of the earth ; ) *the windows of heaven were opened*, means only that the clouds let fall the water which was in them. God caused fire and brimstone to rain down *from heaven* on Sodom ; that is to say, to descend from the air. *The dews of heaven*, the manna which fell *from heaven*, *the winds of heaven* ; in all these passages, *heaven* is put for *the air* surrounding the earth. 2d, *The heaven of the firmament* wherein the stars are disposed. This the Jews of old conceived to be a solid and extended vault of crystal, or of some such nature. *God placed the sun and moon in the firmament of heaven*. The stars are called *the Host of heaven*. 3d, *The third heaven*, or *the highest heaven*, or *the heaven of heavens*, was meant to express that region, where God more directly and gloriously manifests his wondrous perfections and powers, and the future or eternal place of reward for the saints when their souls and bodies are reunited.

It is in one or other of these meanings that the word *heaven* is always used in Scripture, and they ought not to be confounded with one another, for they were so understood by the people to whom the Scriptures were first delivered ; but there are many who, after more than eighteen hundred years have elapsed, appear to think that no terms in the Bible could have been meant originally in a different sense from what they themselves have been accustomed to consider ; and this generally without the least particular investigation, or even knowledge of the language used to express them, or remembering that the English version is but a translation, and that the exact sense of even some English words varies by time.

The learned Bingham, in his *Christian Antiquities*, remarks, that it was the sense of the primitive Church, that “the soul is but in an imperfect state of happiness till the

resurrection, when the whole man shall obtain a complete victory over death, and by the last judgment be established in an endless state of consummate happiness and glory.” \*

Tertullian, who lived in the end of the second century and beginning of the third, was an eminent member of the Christian Church. In his *Apologetic*, he observes—“And if at any time we mention *paradise* a place of divine delightfulness, prepared for the reception of the souls of the righteous, at the same time we mean not heaven.” And in the fourth Book against Marcion, adds—“That region I call Abraham’s Bosom ; a place, though not of celestial height, yet higher than the infernal region, adapted to afford refreshment to the souls of the righteous till the consummation of all things completes the fulness of their rewards in consequence of their resurrection.” †

Victorinus, in his commentary on Rev. vi. 9. concerning the souls that are figuratively said to be under the altar (that is, under divine protection) expresses his opinion to be that they must all attend the second coming of our Lord, or on the last day ; when, only, the rewards and punishments for their deeds on earth are to be distributed.

Almost all, indeed, of the ancient fathers expressed their belief to be that the souls of men went to *Hades*, and were not immediately carried to the heaven of heavens, but remained in the state and place appointed for them out of heaven or hell, until time shall bring the day of judgment.

Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, explaining the incarnation of Christ to a philosopher in the Nicene Council, shows, that He descended to Hades, that He might in all things be like unto us. As we are all of us carried after death to Hades, He accepted of this condition, and voluntarily went there. From whence, says this divine, He made the same

\* Book XV. chap. 3. § 16.

† Translated in the text.—When this author speaks of the *infernal regions*, he alludes to the *Tartarus* of the middle state, and uses the Latin word *Inferi* merely to express a place beneath the earth, that is to say, only out of sight, and in this sense speaks of it in other passages. All ancient authors included both Elysium and Tartarus under the general term *inferi*.

resurrection from death that we are to do. And he afterwards adds to this, and the other things that are mentioned in the same chapter. "This is the Apostolical and unblameable faith of the church."

In an old fragment concerning *The Cause of all Things*, said to be written by one Caius, or at least by some very ancient Christian author, it is more than once asserted that the souls both of the righteous and the wicked are retained in Hades. The author begins thus: "And this is the discourse concerning the angels; but of Hades, in which the spirits of the just and unjust are detained, it is necessary to speak." And he afterwards distinguishes their several mansions. "The just, indeed, are now detained in Hades, but not in the same place where the unjust are; for there is one entrance to this place, of which the gate," &c.—where he places angels as so many guards, who separate the souls as they enter, and either send or conduct them severally to their appointed places. Lastly, he affirms that they remain there till the time of the resurrection. "This is the discourse concerning Hades, in which the souls of men are retained till the time pre-ordained by God, who, when that comes, will raise them altogether."\*

All this is fully shown by the Scriptures, and was the belief of those early Christians who conversed personally with the Apostles, and, as appears from their works, such as those of St. Polycarp and St. Clement, disciples of St. John and St. Paul.

There is a commentary upon the Revelation, still extant, by two Cæsarean Bishops, Andrew and Arathas, noticed by Dr. Burnet, who is uncertain as to the exact time, in which they wrote, but undoubtedly of a very early age, in which it is said—"Death is the separation of the soul and body; but Hades is the country to us invisible, that flies from our inquiry, and hides itself from our knowledge, and that receives our souls as soon as they depart from our bodies."\*

The following extract from the works of that eminently

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\* Translated in the text.



and Irenæus makes heaven and the intermediate receptacle of souls to be distinct places :\* both blessed, but hugely differing in degrees. Tertullian is dogmatical in the assertion that till the voice of the great Archangel be heard, and as long as Christ sits at the right hand of his Father,† making intercession for the Church, so long blessed souls must expect the assembling of their brethren.”—“As it is certain, that no soul could enter into glory before our Lord entered, by whom we hope to have access ; so it is most agreeable to the proportion of the mysteries of our redemption, that we believe the entrance into glory to have been made by our Lord at his glorious ascension, and that his soul went not thither before then, to come back again, to be contracted into the span of mortality, and dwell forty days in his body upon earth. But that he should return from paradise, that is, from the common receptacle of departed spirits, who died in the love of God, to earth again, had in it no lessening of his condition, since himself, in mercy, called back Lazarus from thence, and some others returned to live a life of grace, which, in all senses, is less than the least of glories.‡ Sufficient it is, that all holy souls, departing, go into the hands, that is, into the custody, of our Lord ; that ‘ they rest from their labours ;’ that ‘ their works shall follow them,’ and overtake them, too, at the day of judgment ; that they are happy presently ; that they are visited by angels :§ that God sends, as he pleases, excellent

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their souls, as soon as ever they die, are carried up into heaven.” In the same dialogue, he says—“The souls of the righteous, after their death, are in a better mansion than they were before it ; but the unrighteous and wicked in a worse, waiting till the time of the judgment comes at length.”

\* *Lib. V. c. 3. § Lib. de Anima, et de præscript.*

† These are only to be regarded as figurative expressions, indicating great power and glory.

‡ Bishop Taylor here seems to intimate that a life of grace on earth is a more happy state than the pleasures our souls shall feel in paradise, which cannot be the case, although the latter must be much inferior to those of heaven.

§ Justin Martyr. 75. *inter quæst.* “ *Gentiles ait bonos statim duci a morte ad Paradisum ubi consuetudo et aspectus est Angelorum et visus Christi Sal-*

irradiations and types of his glory, to entertain them in their mansions, 'that their condition is secured : but the crown of righteousness is laid up,' against the day of judgment, and then to be produced, and given to St. Paul, and 'to all that love the coming of our Lord ;' that is, to all who either here in duty, or in their receptacles, with joy and certain hope, long for the revelation of that day. At the day of judgment Christ will send his angels, and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds.\* Then our blessed Lord shall call to the elect to enter into the kingdom, and reject the cursed.—For 'we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,' saith St. Paul, 'that every man may receive in his body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.' Out of the body the reward is not. For since the actions which are to be judged, are the actions of the whole man, so also must be the judicature."†

If it is not intended to represent Paradise as that heaven into which we shall enter as the promised region of everlasting reward, it may be properly enough called a *heavenly state*, from its being one of spiritual happiness, peace and rest, but what the Scriptures designate as the *third* or *highest* heaven is a very different place ; and if the inspired writers understood them as two distinct situations, we must do so likewise. Paradise is as real and substantial a place as the highest heaven, for any thing we know to the contrary ; but the one is a country for disembodied spirits, and the other where material bodies shall also inhabit. In Paradise the sight of the spirit will have faculties to behold what now we could not discern, and spiritual intelligences of different natures may soon become familiar to us, capable of holding converse ; though *in what manner*, is at present as incomprehensible to us as how we receive impressions of words, scenes, and actions in dreams.

Those, who believe that the separate souls are received into

\* Matt. xii. 41. and xxiv. 31.

† See Bishop Taylor's works as edited by Bishop Heber, Vol. III. p. 389. *et seq.*

the highest heaven at death, will perhaps admit that their joys shall be *increased* after the reunion with the glorified body, but the Scriptures are far from saying that the pleasures of a separate soul are to be enjoyed *in the same place* as that of the reunited natures of spirit and body after the resurrection. As plainly as words can assure us, they affirm that the places are different, and although some men now entertain the notion, without appearing to have directed any particular inquiry to ascertain its truth, it is not from any real obscurity in the Bible that the mistake arises, for in it there is always a constantly observed distinction, and the more this is traced, the more it will be made manifest. Whatever joy or sorrow, therefore, may be felt by separate souls, it must be evident that it is not a part of the retribution which is to follow a judgment, any more than, with prisoners previous to trial on earth, the dread of punishment or the hope of acquittal, (with, in the latter, rest and pleasure thence arising,) can be said to be their *sentence*, or part of the doom threatened or held out to them.

In the Rev. Dr. Chalmers' admired discourses on the application of the modern discoveries in Astronomy towards an elucidation of our heavenly prospects, he uses the words *heaven* and *paradise* as synonymous. His belief seems to be, (though it is far from being clearly expressed on one point) that at death the disembodied soul goes to heaven or hell, and remains there till the last day, when it returns to the earth and goes to the very grave for its body: when the one which it is to inhabit throughout eternity has arisen from the dust, and become the habitation of the soul, they both go to the judgment-seat together, and then return to the place whence the soul had come, (from its residence while in the disembodied state,) again forming a complete Being; and the souls of the just being then in a better condition for enjoying happiness than ever before; while the souls of the wicked are to be introduced into bodies susceptible of the torments of hell. He has no doubt that the Heaven of our eternal abode is a real material place,—has solid footing for us, and that we are there to have material bo-



dies. Until the last day, however, souls must be in it *without bodies*, if they go there direct on death, as Dr. C. seems to suppose. In the same sermon to which I am principally referring,\* the Rev. Dr. appears to believe, at the same time, that the heaven we are to reside in to all eternity, is to be our own earth, after it has undergone a great change, which I have discussed elsewhere. If this is to be so, then, even the souls of those saints now deceased, cannot, we should readily think, be inhabiting it *already*; and if not, where are they *at present*? In a *middle state*—is the only answer which can be either rationally or scripturally defended. No one can believe that the earth we inhabit is now actually changed to a heavenly residence, so as to be a fit habitation for separate souls of the just; and their remaining in such a scene of misery and sin as is presented in every place upon it, could be little calculated for producing either rest or happiness to spirits whose mortal trials are over, and who must retain their memories.

In his Lectures on the Catechism, Bishop White of Pennsylvania observes:—"It comes in the way in this place to notice a very common error which has even crept into the public confessions of some churches; as if the beatific vision of holy persons, or their being in heaven, took place on the dissolution of the body. This is not scriptural. Doubtless such persons are in peace, in some state answering to the figurative terms of Paradise and Abraham's bosom, with a measure of bliss, answering to what St. Paul must have implied when he spoke of 'the spirits of just men made perfect.' Still, they have not yet reached the state intimated by the same Apostle, where he speaks of being 'clothed upon with a house which is from heaven.' And the sentiment here expressed is sustained by our church, as in many places, so especially when she prays in the burial service for 'perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul.' But she no where speaks of passing immediately from this world to Heaven."†

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\* From the text, 2 Pet. iii. 13.

† Lectures on the Catechism, p. 36.

Bishop Jolly affirms that—"if the soul be in perfect felicity, in consummate fulness of joy, without the body, we easily stumble at the thought of its being brought back to stand a new trial, and abide a new sentence, amidst the terrors of judgment, as the process is drawn to the life by the great Judge himself.\* But this truly is not Catholic doctrine, and has no authority either of Scripture or primitive antiquity. The holy and happy souls wait for the resurrection of their bodies at their Saviour's appearing to complete his triumph over death and the grave ; and to this period, all the prayers for the faithful departed were directed, in the spirit of St. Paul's for Onesiphorus ; knowing that the holiest has no claim of merit, but that mercy shall triumph in passing the sentence, 'Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom.' "†.

Our Saviour assured his disciples that in his Father's house there were *many mansions*, one of which he was to prepare in an especial manner for them. The universe is the house of the Almighty—the dwelling of the Most High, and the particular mansion which our Lord was so to prepare does not necessarily refer its locality to the highest heaven. I am inclined to suppose, since it appears uncertain, that it alludes in this instance to the region where disembodied spirits reside, as it was there the disciples were to go first, to remain for a while after leaving the earth—for some thousand years it may be ; two of which thousands have already nearly passed. The mansion of everlasting reward we are told was prepared for the just before the foundation of this world. When alluding to this residence, Christ speaks of being there along with them. His going there at that time is now generally connected with his second coming to the earth as its Judge ; but he may display the light of his countenance to the saints in paradise before his return to the earth ; coming from heaven in the character of their Redeemer, and openly assuming the power and majesty of

a king in that kingdom which, at the last day, he is to surrender to the Father. Christ seemed to speak of the place as one into which they would enter immediately after death, and *Hades* is probably a place of an extent and vastness, of which we have now but little conception. Even paradise, although but a part of it, may be large enough to have many an especial garden of Eden, or of delight, prepared within its bounds, where angels and glorious spirits may meet as in the earthly Eden of our first parents, and hold converse with the souls of men ; while God may display a portion of his glory before them, and speak to them as he did of old, but in a more heavenly likeness, which our mortal eyes could not look upon. Indeed, the Scriptures, in very many passages, intimate to us that it only requires our eyes to be opened or made capable of beholding spiritual beings, to see them even on the earth around us, and not only such, but real material beings also, who may be imagined mingling among us unseen.\*

I may notice here another idea that prevails among many Christians as to the residence of the disembodied spirit, viz. —that it remains *on the earth* till the day of judgment. We have scriptural authority for believing that many spiritual beings do act a part assigned them on this globe, but not the most distant intimation that *the souls of men* stay on its surface, or near it, after the death of their bodies. The Rabbins among the Jews believed the souls of the departed may, and in reality do, sometimes come back again, particularly for the first twelve months after their decease ; and then return to Hades, where the souls expect a general resurrection ; so the Heathens believed that apparitions, particularly of persons who had been dead but a short time, were frequent ; that the souls of men often went out of Hades, and

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\* Dr. Isaac Watts agrees in the opinion that *the kingdom of Christ* refers to the middle or separate state—not to heaven, and this he establishes from Scripture in a plain and convincing manner ; the farther consideration of the point shall be resumed in another place, so I shall merely refer at present to Dr. W.'s Essay towards the proof of a Separate State, § 3. Comment. on 5th text.

returned thither again ;\* excepting, however, those of very great villains, who were not allowed this liberty. For this reason Ezekiel says that God shut the door of the Abyss upon the King of Ashur, when he descended into Sheol.† The soul of the rich man, as mentioned in St. Luke, could also find no way out, but he saw nothing to prevent the soul of Lazarus being sent back to the earth on a special mission ; and in Abraham's answer, the refusal of the permission is not grounded on the impossibility of it.—We have, however, no direct scriptural evidence of a human soul returning after death to the earth, continuing there for any time as a separate soul, except that of Moses, who came to converse with our Saviour regarding the death of the latter on Mount Calvary.‡ He appeared in the form of a man, but we have no grounds for supposing he had received a body again. Other souls did return to this world, but it was to reanimate their bodies which were, after death, in a miraculous manner brought to life again, as we have several instances of both in the Old and New Testaments. There is certainly nothing impossible in souls either remaining in a disembodied state here or returning from their appointed place, but what we are considering is, the common and natural course which human spirits pursue after death, according to Divine appointment and revelation.

In *The Times* newspaper of 26th October, 1830, there is an account of a meeting to present a service of plate to the old and highly-respected head master of the school at Reading, Dr. Valpy. In the Doctor's answer to the address made to him on the occasion, he said—"Some years ago a similar tribute was paid to that dear saint in heaven, my lamented wife."—"If spirits have any sense of what is passing below, that happy spirit is now hovering over you whom she loved. I do not know that I can prove that spirits are sensible of our actions, but it is an idea from which I have gained much comfort in many a trying hour."

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\* See a dream related by Plato, in his *De Repub.* Lib. X.

† Ezekiel xxxi. 15.

‡ St. Matt. xvii. 3.—St. Mark ix. 4.—St. Luke ix. 30, 31.

The fancy that the spirits of our departed friends still behold us, is at times cherished by many sensible Christians, though, perhaps, if they were to consider the feeling, they would find it more of the nature of wishing than believing. It generally includes the idea that the ~~fewless~~ but still dear forms our waking fancy dreams of, and which *the mind's eye* often sees so vividly before us, can observe and hear us from their distant dwelling-place wherever it lies ; but, when the vast distance of even the sun or nearest star is considered (of which few people, indeed, appear to have *any* notion) such an extension of the powers of hearing and seeing, in the souls of men, is beyond the utmost limit of any reasonable conception ; and, besides, it is natural to suppose that souls have other things of far higher interest to engage their attention, than to be attending minutely, by their own observation, to what is doing upon earth, although we can have no doubt that they continue interested in our spiritual welfare. If it be admitted, however, that souls carry their memories with them; (as the soul of Dives is represented to have done,) and are able to communicate with each other, neither of which can be doubted,—then, they must receive frequent intelligence, and the method, therefore, taken by some negro sovereigns of sending news to their departed ancestors, (by giving a message to a slave, and then beheading him,) carries no improbability of accomplishment in the face of it, ~~or~~ against the transmission of the message. That spirits can of themselves actually come from their place of rest to the earth whenever there is any thing interesting (in our eyes) going on here, is too wild an idea to be *seriously* believed, however pleasing it may be as a mere fancy. It would seldom if ever be for their happiness if they could, and would be inconsistent with that state of *rest* into which the just are promised an entrance, or that confinement which both the good and the bad are said in Scripture to be subjected to in their separate state.\*

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\* Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, used to say, that she hoped, in the next world, she would not be sensible of what was passing in this, as it would effectually destroy all probability of her being happy.

There is another supposition which may also be considered—whether the soul may **not** continue on the earth for a short time after death, before it takes its flight for Hades. Bishop Heber had such an idea, and some may think it far from an improbable one ; but I believe otherwise, for several reasons. Although our Lord continued forty days upon the earth after his resurrection, yet his soul went on *the very day* of his death to paradise. The weight of Scripture authorities, although they are not clear on the point, tend to show us that the freed soul sets out instantly for the now unseen mansions, but as we have no certain grounds for establishing a general doctrine on this, I shall leave it to be decided by others, if it can be so during this life.

The passage which I alluded to as containing an opinion of Bishop Heber's on this very interesting point, is to be found in his Indian correspondence. While on a journey to the upper provinces of Bengal, he had in his suit a young man who died at Dacca, to whose sister, then residing at Calcutta, the Bishop wrote a letter of condolence and consolation on the occasion, dated in July, 1824, of which the following is an extract :—" One more consideration I cannot help addressing to you, though it belongs to a subject wrapt in impenetrable darkness. A little before your poor brother ceased to speak at all, and after his mind had been for some time wandering, he asked me in a half whisper, ' Shall I see my sister to-night ? ' I could not help answering, though in a different sense, perhaps, from that in which he meant the question, *that I thought it possible*. I know not (indeed who can know ?) whether the spirits of the just are ever permitted to hover over those whom they have loved most tenderly ; but if such permission be given, (and who can say it is impossible ?) then it must greatly diminish the painful sense of separation which even the souls of the righteous may be supposed to feel, if he sees you resigned, patient, hopeful, trusting in the same Cross which was his refuge in the hour of dread, and that good Providence to whose care he fervently and faithfully committed you." \* It will be

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\* From Narrative of a Journey, &c. vol. iii. p. 311.

seen from the above, that this great divine had no doubt of the soul's continuing conscious immediately after the death of the body, and exercising its faculties of perception ; but he was doubtful whether it is permitted to remain any time on earth in its separate state, and believed that if souls do so, it must be in consequence of leave given to them, which seems to imply, that, if they sometimes do linger on the scene of their worldly trial, it is out of the ordinary course of nature. It is not probable that, when the released soul has arrived at its assigned place, it is or has ever been allowed to *return* to visit the earth, except in a few miraculous instances already noticed.

The Church of Scotland in one place seems to sanction the notion of souls continuing upon the earth in their disembodied state, although it is irreconcilable with her Confession of Faith. The fifty-ninth Paraphrase, published under the express authority of the General Assembly, begins thus :—

“ Behold what witnesses unseen,  
 Encompass us around ;  
*Men once like us by suffering tried,*  
*But now with glory crowned.”*

It is intimated to be taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews,\* but, on a reference, there will not be found any authority for what is above in *Italics*. It is an assumed explanation of, or addition to the Apostle's words, plainly telling us, that the separated souls of men do not go to heaven or to hell, but remain on the earth or in its atmosphere in the mean time, as spectators of our conduct ; which cannot be their natural fate after death, for reasons before given. It may even be made a question whether St. Paul spoke of any order of beings really observing our conduct, or only meant that God himself by his all-observing eye saw every thing we did, and metaphorically alluded to the crowd of witnesses on the Grecian Stadium, which observed the actions of the competitors at the Olympic games ; but, sanctioned as the idea is otherwise, of unseen spirits watch-

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\* Chap. xii.

ing over us, it would be going farther than we are entitled to do, to suppose that the Apostle made no allusion in reality to any such, and that in using the word *μαρτυρῶν* (*marturon*, which we translate *witnesses*) he meant the souls or ghosts of men, good or bad; which is what his words, at least, do not authorize. The dreadful sufferings of many good men, while they were in life on earth, are spoken of in the preceding chapter, but it is nowhere said, as far as I can trace, that their spirits remain on the earth, or in the air, for any purpose whatever. If a person, however, shall think it sufficiently clear that the reference by the Apostle is to the spirits of good men, the passage would refute the notion of souls going at death to the highest heaven, to remain there for ever, as they cannot at present be crowned with glory, and on earth at the same time, even on Dr. Chalmers' supposition, of this globe itself being to be changed at the last day into a heavenly residence. If they be supposed in a distant region, yet with power to see and hear what is going on upon earth, then they could not, with strict propriety, be said to be *surrounding* or *encompassing* us.

In the thirty-second chapter of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, the Church of Scotland, after acknowledging the deathless nature of the soul, adds,—“The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies,\* and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day.† Besides these two places for souls separated from the bodies, the Scripture acknowledgeth none.”

On having recourse to those texts referred to for the doctrine above set down, we find it not so supported in certain

\* Heb. xii. 23.—2 Cor. v. 18.—Phil. i. 23.—Acts iii. 21.—Ephes. iv. 10.

† Luke xvi. 23, 24.—Parable of Lazarus and Dives—Acts, i. 25.—Jude 6.—1 Pet. iii. 19.



particulars, and it is, besides, contradicted by some of the most esteemed Presbyterian divines, whose works display the greatest learning and sound sense, proving unanswerably that there is another place for separate spirits than the highest heavens and the region of everlasting punishment ; or, more correctly speaking, that these two places are not intended for separate souls at all ; no human souls being to enter into either until they bring their immortal bodies with them, which they are not to receive until the resurrection. To insist that *Paradise* and *Tartarus* (both comprehended under the name of *Hades*) are the same as *the Highest Heaven* and *the Lake of fire*, is at best, but an assertion, which remains to be proved. Although the Presbyterian Church does not, like the Romish, directly affirm that there is one judgment at death, and another at the last day, yet we might hold from the foregoing quotation, that they have the same belief in this ; or else that the former imagine souls are sent, in the first instance, to their ultimate destination, without any trial or sentence, yet it will be seen that the same Confession of Faith distinctly allows only *one* judgment, which is to be at the last day, and that *then* every one is to receive the sentence which is to decide his fate,—the one doctrine being irreconcilable with the other. It is easy to conceive souls being taken to different mansions of *safe keeping* until sentence be passed upon them regarding *their eternal doom*, and where joyful hope, or utter despair may make them very happy or miserable before either have received *the* reward or punishment which Revelation has announced ; but it is hard to understand how they can in their imperfect state *as beings* have been rewarded or otherwise without any trial, and if there be a tribunal before which we must appear immediately on our spirits leaving their mortal covering or house, it is strange that the Scriptures give us no intimation of it, and even lead us to think it impossible and inconsistent with the one which is described in such an awful manner.

What should we think of a person who at one time openly avowed and taught the truth of the modern system of the

universe, and yet, without any admitted change of opinion, at another time inculcated that the sky is a solid glass hemisphere, quoting Job as authority ! (which could be done distinctly for the derivation of the term *firmament*,) or who shall assure an audience to-day that the earth is a globe, and to-morrow refer to the Scriptures for its being a vast plain supported by pillars, and that it 'cannot be moved !—On one occasion to affirm that the soul of man is his principal part,—indeed, the sole part necessary to constitute his identity, and his body but a dwelling or a garment, wholly changed several times in the course of his life ;—and then, that because the body with which he died lay senseless in the grave,—that *man* must be said to be insensible, although his soul is living in another place !—Now to speak of the departed as *in heaven* ;—and *then* as being *in the grave*, not to awaken till the resurrection. All these things seem perfect irreconcilables, and one scarcely appears more so than another.

When the same church insists we shall believe that the soul at death goes immediately to heaven or hell,—and also that *it does not go* till a day yet deep in futurity, it is evident that *both* cannot be true. A decision must be made between them—one or other must be held orthodox doctrine and the other rejected.

In describing *the last day*, the Presbyterian Church paraphrases, with great beauty and correctness, several passages of the New Testament, which ought to decide this matter :—

“ For, lo ! before the Son, as Judge,  
Th’ assembl’d world shall stand,  
To take the punishment or prize  
From his unerring hand.  
Impartial retributions *then*  
Our diff’rent lives await ;  
Our present actions, good or bad,  
Shall fix our future fate.”\*

This most clearly refers to the last or day of judgment, when *all* human kind shall meet,—which time is not yet come ; but

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\* Par. li. 9, 10. from 2 Cor. v. 1—11.

to establish it still further, let us refer to another paraphrase, for the time when the saints are first to *enter* into heaven :—

“Then they who live shall changed be,  
And they who sleep shall wake;  
The graves shall yield their ancient charge,  
And earth's foundations shake.  
The saints of God, from death set free,  
With joy shall mount on high;  
The heav'nly hosts with praises loud  
Shall meet them in the sky.

“Together to their *Father's* house  
With joyful hearts they go;  
And dwell for ever with the Lord,  
Beyond the reach of woe.”†

As Presbyterians admit that the soul continues in conscious being immediately after death, and, (as in the above,) that it does not go to heaven till a future time when all saints shall ascend together—we might infer most decidedly from these doctrines, that they believed in a middle state, as a temporary residence for the soul, if we were not aware of the article quoted from the Confession of Faith.

The perfection of the spirits of just men deceased, in the place where they now are, of which St. Paul speaks, must be evidently considered only in a *comparative* sense, as in many other places of Holy Writ. So the same Apostle calls those Christians on earth *perfect* who are advanced in knowledge above their fellows, as in 1 Cor. ii. 6. “I speak wisdom among them that are *perfect*,” and in 1 Phil. ii. 15. “Let as many as are *perfect* be thus minded.” Absolute perfection belongs only to God, yet when human nature is admitted into that heaven prepared for us, it shall be purified so much as to leave no stain of sin or imperfection; but that time has not yet arrived to any soul. It is written in the *Book of inspired truth*, that the angels are not absolute-

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\* The sea is to give up the dead bodies which are in it, also before the judgment, and this has not yet been done.

† Par. liii. 5—7. from 1 Thess. iv.

ly pure in the sight of Gōd, and that even them he “charged with folly.”\*

Dr. Doddridge refers this perfection which the saints shall yet inherit, to the glory of the heavenly state to be entered upon *after* the judgment.† St. Paul asserts that the saints of old, “all having received a good report by faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better things for us, *that they without us should not be made perfect.*”‡ or enter into the full completion of their happiness, until we have joined them at the final and triumphant appearing of Christ. In the 13th verse of the same chapter, we find another text of similar import:—“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” or, as we find this verse paraphrased by Mr. Gilpin:—“All the eminent patriarchs died before the completion of the promises they had received: but having full faith in them, they considered themselves in this world only as on a journey; passing to their heavenly home.” There seems at first sight rather a difference as to fact between these verses and some we find in the sixth chapter. “That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham . . . saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.”§

If these last words are contrasted with what St. Paul writes in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews, and “received not the promises,” they will easily be seen to mean, when taken together, that though the promise was verbally made to Abraham, and the faithful in former times, yet it was not actually *fulfilled* till our Saviour had completed the atonement for sin, but that the departed saints being still in their souls in a conscious state, were therefore in a con-

\* Job iv. 18.

† Heb. xi. 39, 40.

‡ Doddridge on Heb. xi. 40.

§ Verses 12—15.

dition to be made glad by the atonement offered up for fallen man, and could thereafter look forward with greater certainty and joy to a reunion with material bodies, and to an entrance into heaven, thus purchased for them, but into which they should not enter until all those faithful alive had joined them. They were not to be made *perfect as beings* until all the just were so likewise after the resurrection. On the just souls in Hades learning that the atonement had been made for them as well as for those alive in the body, they would have as good cause to rejoice as those upon the earth, and would do so even more than the others, for they would be more sensible of the value of the deed. It is not very unlikely that the souls of some of the most eminent among the patriarchs returned to the earth with that of their Saviour's, and that their's may have been among the bodies which arose out of their graves at his resurrection. As the bodies of the saints (though perhaps not all of them) which then arose, were recognized in Jerusalem by some people living there at the time, it would seem that they had not been long dead, and been acquaintances of those who knew them. The recognizing them as being those who had died, was necessary to the evidence of their miraculous appearance and resurrection. We may therefore suppose, with the most probable reason, that they were in their mortal lives followers of Christ, and distinguished believers in his doctrine. This idea, however, need not lead us to infer that none of the ancient fathers accompanied them.

Dr. Whitby, in coincidence with the primitive fathers, also maintains from the text, Heb. xi. 40. "that the souls of the Old Testament saints, as well as those who have died under the Christian dispensation, are not exalted to the highest heavens:"—"that they had not received their full reward, yea, that they were not to expect it till the day of judgment."

Dr. Macknight, of the Presbyterian Church, the author of a work of great authority, on the *Harmony of the Gospels*, and of *A new translation of the Epistles, with a commentary and notes*, in various parts of the latter work refers to the

arguments of Whitby, as sustaining fully what he advances on this subject. He maintains that the righteous do not enter on the bliss of heaven until the final judgment, and, of course, that they must, in the interval, abide in a separate place. That the righteous are not to be rewarded till the end of the world, is evident from Christ's words, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it shall be in the end of the world," ("the tares are the children of the wicked one.") "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."\* In like manner, St. Peter hath told us, that the righteous are to be made glad with their reward at the revelation of Christ,† when they are to "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."‡

Here it should be noticed, that although the great promised reward in the kingdom of the Father, is not to be given until the end of the world, when the saints are to enter heaven led by their Saviour after the judgment is over, still, a preliminary rest and pleasure in the kingdom of the Son, arising from reflection on the past, and hope with respect to the future, may solace the disembodied spirits in that intermediate state, and continue as long as they are in its paradise.

Dr. Watts refers to those words of Christ—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."—On which he remarks—"Here it is evident, that our Saviour prays that those who shall believe on him through the word of the Apostles, may be present with him in his kingdom to behold his glory, and is not that a very considerable part of his glory"—"to be Lord and King of his Church? but this peculiar glory reaches no further than the resurrection and judgment, and cannot be seen afterwards; for in 1 Cor. xv. 24. 'Then cometh the end, and Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father; the Son himself also shall be subject unto the Father, that God may be all in all.'"—"It seems therefore most probable, that it is only or chiefly in the separate state of souls depart-

\* Matt. xiii. 40. 43.

† 1 Pet. iv. 13.

‡ Chap. v. 4.

ed, that the saints have a special promise of beholding the mediatorial glory of Christ in his kingdom." In 2 Pet. i. 11. this kingdom is called an *everlasting* one, but the Greek word which we thus render, was not understood by the Jews to mean *never ending*, as we would now infer from it, but only a very long time, or, as Dr. Watts observes, "because it was to continue to the end of the world."\* It must be allowed that we are too liable to put interpretations on scriptural phrases according to the meanings which we now attach to similar ones in our own language, forgetting that the Jews may have understood them differently. Thus it is said in Revelation,† that the smoke of a burning city shall ascend to heaven *for ever and ever*, without its being intended to mean that it should continue to do so without end. The expression *all or whole multitude* may be referred to as another example which in Jewish phraseology denotes sometimes the greatest part only: Thus, Josephus tells us that the whole multitude (all the males) of Lydda were gone to a distant place to assist at a religious feast, yet immediately adds, that fifty were slain who were afterwards found in the city, and it would appear from his narration, that still more remained there hidden.‡

The Rev. Thomas Scott agrees in explaining the scriptural doctrine to be, that the kingdom of Christ is now subsisting, and will come to an end.—"The distinction between the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, and the absolute, universal, and everlasting kingdom of God, is every where implied in Scripture. The Father, as the Head of the absolute kingdom, ceased not to reign, when the Son was advanced to the mediatorial throne: that authority was only intended to endure for a time, in order to accomplish certain important ends to the glory of God in man's salvation. At the day of judgment, this kingdom will be terminated: Christ having executed his commission, will

\* Essay towards the proof of a separate state, § 3.

† Chap. xix. 3. See also Isaiah xxxiv. 9.

‡ See Jos. de Bell. Jud. Lib. II. cap. xix. § 1.

cease to reign over all worlds as Mediator, having publicly delivered up the kingdom to God in the person of the Father, yet he will in human nature retain a peculiar authority over his redeemed people: and as One with, and equal to the Father, he will, with Him and the Holy Spirit, reign One God over all, blessed for evermore: nor will he any more cease to reign *in this sense*, when he has given up the mediatorial kingdom; than the Father ceased to reign when he appointed the Son to that kingdom. For in this passage, as in some others, the Person of the Father is mentioned, as filling the throne and appointing the Mediator; in order to distinguish that absolute authority of the Son in human nature."\*

The mediatorial kingdom of Christ, therefore, having, of course, a reference to the human race who are either alive on the earth or in the disembodied state, must be now *here* or in *Hades*. Whatever this earth may become when the Millennium shall arrive, which it is said shall change it to a blissful residence, when all men shall obey and adore their great Head—this is far from being the case at present, for none will dispute that the devil as yet reigns, throughout the earth among men, more than God, so the kingdom referred to *must be in Hades*, and more particularly in its Paradise. If we admit this, all the gospel promises of being with Christ as soon as we die, and intimations of the present state of the saints—of their reposing with him from the fatigue of earthly pains, will be explained with beautiful consistency, and will be seen to be true, even in a literal sense, without a reference to what is to take place after the Resurrection, when the accepted of the Lord shall have a higher happiness in the kingdom of the Father, which we pray may come, and the separate souls in paradise, we are told, also loudly join in the wish, notwithstanding their present happiness.

When it is said that Christ is now set down at the right hand of God, no more is probably meant, than to express by a metaphor borrowed from earthly dignity, that he had

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\* See Scott's Bible, notes on 1 Cor. v. 20—28.



re-assumed his divine power and majesty. When we consider ourselves while on earth in the presence of the all-seeing eye of the Almighty Father of the Universe, and who can hear our prayers, surely it would ~~not~~ be necessary for the Son to be in the highest heaven in order to be able to mediate for us with the Father. Christ's abode may yet be said to be in heaven (even meaning *the highest*) because his *permanent* residence is there; for, as the intermediate state must end, the longest duration it can have, must be but as a day, compared to eternity.

That the soul must first enter into a middle state before Heaven or Hell, and that the intermediate region is called *Hades* in the New Testament, admits of no more doubt than that our Saviour's soul went there on his death, and no one ever translated *Hades* by *Heaven*: The Presbyterian Church, so far from now condemning the doctrine of a middle state as heretical, must be held to have acquiesced in it on more mature consideration, since she has long allowed it to be taught unchallenged in her schools of Divinity.

The arguments for a middle state by Dr. Campbell, which we find in his dissertation on *Hades*, are characterized by the American Bishop, Dr. Hobart, "as full, clear, forcible, and conclusive,"\*—an opinion which I do not believe, any Greek scholar will venture to contradict. The two passages more immediately referred to are as follow:—"We have clear proof from the New Testament, that *Hades* denotes *the intermediate state of souls* between Death and the general Resurrection. In the Apocalypse† we learn that *Death* and *Hades*; by our translators rendered *Hell* as usual, *shall*, immediately after the general judgment, *be cast into the lake of fire*. This is the *second death*: In other words, the death which consists in the separation of the soul from the body, and the state of *souls* intervening between death and judgment, *shall be no more*. To the wicked, *these* shall be succeeded by a more terrible death, the damnation of *Gehenna*, hell, properly so called. Indeed in this sacred Book, the

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\* See this Prelate's Sermons, Vol. II. p 427.

† Chap. xx. 14.

commencement as well as the destruction of this intermediate state are so clearly marked, as to render it almost impossible to mistake them. In a preceding chapter,\* we learn that *Hades* follows close upon the heels of death; and from the other passage quoted, that both are involved in one common ruin, at the universal judgment. Whereas, if we interpret *Hades*, *Hell*, in the Christian sense of the word, the whole passage is rendered nonsense. *Hell* is represented as being cast into *Hell*: for so the lake of fire, which is in this place, also denominated the second death, is universally interpreted." (p. 294.)—"Many expressions of Scripture in the natural and obvious sense, imply that an intermediate and separate state of the soul is actually to succeed death. Such are the words of our Lord to the penitent thief on the cross; Stephen's dying petition; the comparisons which the Apostle Paul makes in different places between the enjoyment which true Christians can attain by their continuance in this world, and that which they enter on at their departure out of it, and several other passages. Let the words referred to be read by any judicious person, either in the original, or in the common translation, which is sufficiently exact for this purpose; and let him, setting aside all theory or system, say candidly, whether they would not be understood by the gross of mankind, as presupposing that the soul will and may exist separately from the body, and be susceptible of happiness or misery in that state." (p. 315.†)

In the funeral service of the Church of England, the "joy and felicity" into which the souls of the just are said to enter, is not supposed to be the full measure of happiness which we shall feel in heaven, for we pray that God may be pleased to accomplish the number of his elect, and "to hasten his kingdom"—"that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy Holy Name, may have our perfect con-

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\* Chap. vi. 8.

† I am aware that Dr. Campbell's opinions upon some other points of

summation and bliss, both in soul and body, in thy eternal and everlasting glory." If the departed were *now* enjoying their eternal reward, the Church would not pray that the time might soon arrive when they might accomplish it. Farther, in the collect, a clear distinction is made between the state of rest in which the blessed now are, and that state which they shall enjoy after the resurrection. "We meekly beseech thee, O Father! to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him, as our hope is, that our brother doth, and that *at the general resurrection in the last day*, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall *then* pronounce to all that love and fear thee, saying, 'Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive ye the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world.'"

In the Litany, we pray to God to deliver us in the day of judgment, which would be a petition quite unnecessary, if, *before* that judgment, sentence had been pronounced against every individual at his death, and if the just went to the highest heaven, and the wicked to the place of eternal torment; but upon the belief of a middle state, it is a very reasonable and proper prayer.

The doctrine of the Episcopal Church of Scotland is thus expressed in one of her prescribed catechisms:—"That the souls of men are conducted to an invisible place when they leave the body, there to remain in what is called an intermediate state, till the general resurrection."\* The agreement between this Church and that of England on the point, has

doctrine have been disputed; but with these we have here nothing to do; his dissertation on *Hades* will bear any investigation in its most essential points, by the ablest scholars. A marble bust of this great man has just been subscribed for, principally by Divines of the Presbyterian communion, who stile him "one of the brightest ornaments" of their church, which he undoubtedly ought to be considered. 1831.

\* See Catechism for the instruction of young persons on the principles of the Christian religion, for the use of the Scotch Episcopal Church. Aberdeen, 1825. p. 32.

been denied ; but how the souls of the departed can be awaiting *in heaven* or *hell* for the judgment of the last day, it would be difficult to explain, and the Church of England has been shown to admit that they are not yet judged, but awaiting this reckoning.

The question of the disembodied soul's immediate entrance into Heaven or Hell, rests mainly on whether a judgment as to its eternal fate passes upon it whenever it leaves the body. All Christians admit a great and solemn judgment *at the last day*, and every one must agree that this day has not yet dawned. Some, therefore, in order to establish that the soul goes immediately to heaven or hell on death, contend as preliminary, that there is *a double judgment* ; one at the soul's departure from the body, more private than the other, and that the second is to be held at the second coming of Christ to the earth, before all the assembled universe in regard to which we have any knowledge. The last is well established in Holy Writ, but the *first* rests entirely on the assertions of uninspired writers, while those who adopt a belief in it, confuse them both together, so as to render it very difficult to understand exactly what, upon the whole, they wish to establish. It will be seen, if it is here proved that there is only *one* time of judgment for all, which is not yet come, that if any souls have already gained admittance into heaven, it must have been *without* a judgment upon them, a doctrine which none have been hardy enough to assert ; and it will therefore follow, that, if there has been no trial, there have none as yet gone to the heaven of their reward. The question may be rested on this ground alone, and as the discussion is an extremely interesting and important one, I shall enter into it at some length.

A belief in souls going to the scene and happiness of their reward, or to the place of damnation, or to Purgatory for a time, must evidently include a judgment which sends them to these places, whether such a previous one be directly acknowledged or not ; -but, since the one at the last day is such as it is represented in Scripture, it must be allowed to

be totally inconsistent with any other where each case had been before decided. Romanists pretend to other authentic sources of information than the Scriptures ; but Protestants, who do not, must all agree, on consideration, that the judgment at death is pure invention, as the Scriptures are the only unquestionable test of any doctrine in religion. There are, it may be said, different interpretations put on the same passage in Holy Writ by Commentators ; but that Record of our Faith is never appealed to as establishing a judgment on each soul as it leaves the world, and any reference to it is made to show that all judgment is referred to the last day alone.

The judgment is uniformly represented in Scripture as to be held on the quick *and the dead* ; that is, on those who are then found alive upon the earth, and on all those of the human kind who have died since the world began. All must then appear without exception. In the exposition of the Apostle's Creed by the College of Douay, this is said to be admitted by the Roman Church ; and the last judgment is expressly represented to include "the whole human race and progeny of man"—"not only such as are living at the time of his coming, but likewise all such as have died since the creation of the world"—when—"our thoughts, words, and works, even the secrets of our souls, are to be brought to light."—"What shall be the sentence of the just ? *Ans.* Come, ye blessed of my Father, and receive ye the kingdom which is prepared for you ; for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat," &c.

How can all this agree with a belief that those so blessed at that time have been long in heaven, having gone thither direct from the earth, or by the way of Purgatory ? Or how can the sentence on the wicked be then applied to those who have been long in hell, and who must be taken out for the occasion, *to be sentenced to go back again !!* And yet the same authority assures us that the souls which are once there *never get out* ; and if so, then *the bodies* that rise from the ground are perhaps imagined to stand before the throne at the last day *without their souls*, and then go to their eternal

residence to be rejoined *there* : the soul having been before judged by itself, and if it has been pardoned, gone to heaven immediately after the death of the body ; or if of a sufficient wickedness to doom it to hell, then it has gone there on leaving the earth ; if only with venial sins, which can be purified by Purgatory, thither its flight has been directed, and there it must remain for the exact time its turpitude requires, unless the church shortens it.\*

In the *General Catechism* of the Papal Church, we find this question answered in the 30th Lesson. “What do you mean by the Last day ? *Ans.* The day of *judgment* ; when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and *then* he will render to every one according to his works.”† In a few lines further on, however, it appears that the last day is *not* the day of judgment, and that every one has had rendered to him according to his works long before, with the exception, of course, it must be presumed, of those who have not known death, and therefore never had a previous opportunity of being tried. “*Ques.* As every one is *judged immediately after death*, what need is there of a general judgment ? ”—(a very natural question.) “*Ans.* That the providence which often here permits the good to suffer, and the wicked to prosper, may appear before all men.”—So the last day (in the opinion of the Roman Church) must merely mean one in which, with the said exception, God justifies his *previous* judgments before angels and men, who knew such sentences had been passed, in millions of cases, hundreds or thousands of years before ! And yet the words of the judge, as we find them prophetically recorded in Scripture, are not those of justification or explanation of his former decrees, but actual sentences, to be immediately followed by a rendering unto every one according to his works.

The 33d chapter of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith treats of the last judgment, and besides alluding to no former one, adheres strictly to the scriptural description of it as

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\* The terms *heaven* and *hell* are here used in the common significations.

† 2 Cor. v. 10.—Matt. xvi. 27.

the only one. "In which day," it says, "not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil." In the 3d Article of this chapter, we are told:—"As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity: so will he have *that day*, unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at which hour the Lord will come." In this, the day of judgment is distinctly and truly stated to be the same for all—the last day; but it follows, that if souls are admitted into "the third heaven" immediately on death, and those of the wicked are then cast into "the hell of torments," for final punishment; they are so without any revealed investigation into their conduct while on earth.

In a discourse preached in the Chapel of King's College, Old Aberdeen, by a Lecturer appointed by the University, the scriptural doctrine of the judgment is thus very plainly stated:—"Christ will assuredly return to reckon with his servants." *When* is this reckoning to be? "*At the second coming*, the splendour and power of the mightiest monarchies will sink into contempt, when contrasted with the dignity and glory of the Son of God. 'Behold! he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him,' &c. Before this judge every one of us shall stand. We must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, to answer for the deeds done in the body. *And the scrutiny will be most strict and impartial,*" "For, *at the return of our Lord*, we must render an account of all the talents entrusted to us." "The faithful disciple of Christ shall *then* have cause to rejoice, and be exceeding glad, *for the day of his redemption draweth nigh*. Every good work and holy purpose will *then* be found recorded in favour of the servants who knew and obeyed the will of their absent master."—"The goodly company of the prophets,

Apostles, and Evangelists, the noble army of Martyrs, and the innumerable host of the redeemed"—"shall assemble before the throne of the judge." "But amidst this joyful group, who *now* come forward to receive the reward of their exertions," &c.\*

Is there any thing in these descriptions of the last day which could lead us to imagine there had been a *previous* judgment on every soul at death, and that all of them who had left their mortal bodies, had been before that time tried and rewarded or punished?—had been actually in the third heavens, or in the hell of torments? Is not the contrary made manifest?

Before proceeding farther, I shall show how common the error is, which I am here endeavouring to prove to be unscriptural, and shall quote an opinion by an eminent divine as to a judgment *at death* which he endeavours to support by argument. The fancied *necessity* for a judgment before the soul's entering upon either pain or pleasure after separation, rests greatly on the *nature* of these; whether they follow, in the first place, as natural consequences from the kind of life led on earth, or are experienced by way of punishment or reward. This shall be considered at more length in a future chapter, but I may here shortly advert to it in the words of Dr. Watts, who admits the possibility that *in the separate state*, the pleasures or sorrows which attend departed souls may be only such as are the necessary consequences of a life spent in the practice of virtue or vice, without any formalities of standing before a judgment-seat, or a solemn sentence of absolution or condemnation, yet the very entrance upon this state, whether it be of torment or peace, the Dr. says "would seem to signify that the state of that soul is adjudged or determined by the great Governor of the world, and this is all that is necessarily meant by a particular judgment of each soul at death, whether it pass under the solemn formalities of a judgment or not."—In another place this worthy

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\* From a work entitled "Ten Discourses, &c. by George Tulloch, A.M. Preacher of the Gospel." Published in 1831.



writer says—"I will not undertake to determine, when the soul is dismissed from the body, whether there be any explicit sentence passed concerning its eternal state of happiness or misery according to its works in this life, or whether the pain or pleasure that belongs to the separate state be not chiefly such as arises by natural consequence from a life of holiness, and as being under the power of an approving or condemning conscience; but it seems to me more probable that, since 'the spirit returns to God who gave it,'—'to God the Judge of all,' with whom 'the spirits of the just made perfect dwell;' and since the spirit of a Christian when 'absent from the body is present with the Lord,' that is, Christ,—I am more inclined to think that there is some sort of judicial determination of this important point, either by God himself, or by Jesus Christ, into whose hands he has committed all judgment. 'It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.'\* Whether immediate or more distant is not here expressly declared, though the immediate connexion of the words hardly gives room for eighteen hundred years to intervene. But if the solemn formalities of a judgment be delayed, yet the conscience of a separate spirit reflecting on a holy or a sinful life is sufficient to begin a heaven or a hell immediately after death."

When a man forms his opinion of such matters merely on what seems to him *probable*, or without considering the whole which is revealed regarding it, it is far from unlikely that he is wrong. Our belief here ought to be grounded on Revelation alone, and we ought to interpret it in the fairest manner, constantly keeping in view to render one passage consistent with the meaning of another, as far as possible. In one sense, our fate may be said to be decided immediately on death, and the treatment of the soul may be rigorous or not, from its being our conduct in this life—our faith and deeds, which will determine our doom at the day of judgment. As in an earthly prison, so there is no farther probation in *Hades*. It is not our repentance *there*, that will influence our

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\* Heb. ix. 27.

final sentence ; but still, the trial, sentence, and execution may be far distant, in order that all mankind who ever lived or shall live, may be tried together, which would seem even a very probable *supposition*, had not such a manner of judgment been revealed in the most direct terms possible. The texts quoted by Dr. Watts would certainly render probable the inference he draws, if there were none of a contrary nature and more direct of equal authority. Now this author allows that *all* of them may be consistently explained by believing that the judgment is not to take place till the time when it is revealed that it shall do so. He refers to none of the many descriptions of the judgment itself—to none of those places which plainly state that it is to be on the day of the Lord—at his second coming—at the harvest which his angels shall then reap ; and therefore mere uncertain and partial *inferences* cannot stand in competition with direct intimations. Were there any text which clearly revealed a judgment soon after death, before or on the soul's admission into either of the mansions in Hades, we should feel quite unable to form an opinion and belief on the subject, when we also reflected on what is said in other places,—but there are no such real inconsistencies in the Bible when properly examined.

In *a Dissertation on the discipline of the Quakers*, it is said, that at one time—"They thought fit to embroil themselves in new quarrels about the state of souls after death ; several maintained that the good went immediately to heaven, and the bad to hell : Their adversaries objected that it followed from thence, that both were judged as soon as dead, and that by consequence there was to be no resurrection of the flesh, nor an universal judgment"\* *inferences* almost unavoidable, if souls were at death to be taken to their eternal residences.

While a few endeavour to bring arguments to prove that there is a judgment at death, by far the greater number who

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\* Picart's *Ceremonies and Religious Customs*, Vol. VI. p. 127. Fol. ed. London, 1737.

entertain the notion, speak of it, seemingly, as a matter so plain as to require no evidence at all, beyond what every Christian must know. In Shakspeare's tragedy of *Macbeth*, the latter, on hearing a bell toll just before the murder of the king, exclaims—

“Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell,  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell!”

Those who refer to the Scriptures will find that it is the sound of what is metaphorically called the last trumpet which is to summon us to stand before the white throne of judgment, where only it is to be openly decided whether we shall go to the one or other of these places.

In Sir Walter Scott's tragedy of *Auchindrane*, the hero of the piece asks—“Where's M'Lellan?” Phillip answers—

“In the deep—  
Both in the deep, and what's immortal of them,  
Gone to the judgment-seat where we must meet them.”

The distinction drawn in the second line, is, in so far, quite proper and right, but when we have authority only for believing that the immortal parts of the two men alluded to, are merely *committed for trial*, and in a place of *safe keeping*, where they may be for some thousand years to come, it cannot be said that they are gone to be tried immediately, —the court of judgment not sitting till the last day.

In Pomfret's poetical works we find these lines :—

“Since we can die but once, and after death  
Our state no alteration knows;  
But when we have resign'd our breath,  
The immortal spirit goes  
To endless joys or everlasting woes.”

If the state of the disembodied spirit experiences no alteration, then the body is not rejoined to it at the resurrection, for that must bring about a very great alteration of its state, and the *endless* joys and *everlasting* woes do not even *commence*, according to the Scriptures, until after the judgment,

which not being yet come, the nature of those which are to last for ever have not yet begun to be experienced.

The Rev. Dr. Dodd admits\* that it is the solemn day which is fast approaching (meaning thereby, as he himself says, *the last day*) “which is to determine our fate for this eternity”—“and that upon a *day* appointed, our Lord will pass the sentence upon all; when those who have done good shall go into eternal life, and those who have done evil into everlasting fire.” And yet, in many places, he represents departed men as *immediately* entering upon eternity, and already feeling endless joys and sorrows, as if the last day was past and the judgment over; but such contradictions must ever result, unless the scriptural doctrine of a *middle state of temporary residence for disembodied souls* is recognized. To imagine that we enter upon *eternity* at death, is a very common error, but the least consideration must satisfy any one that it is so, if they believe in a resurrection and day of judgment, and that the state which is to succeed life on earth can only last till then, whatever may be its nature.

The Rev. Thomas Robinson, late domestic chaplain to Bishop Heber, in a funeral sermon preached at Calcutta, and afterwards published, says of this truly great and good man:—“He had scarcely put off the sacred robes with which he served at the altar of his God on earth, when he was suddenly admitted to his *sanctuary on high*, and clothed *with the garments of immortality*.”—“He has exchanged a life of labour, and anxiety, and imperfection, for the repose and blessedness of *heaven*. His warfare is accomplished; and he has passed from the conflicts of the church on earth to the glories of an *everlasting triumph*.” The soul, even when on earth, is immortal, and does not die; it is *the revived and changed body* which is said to put on immortality at the resurrection.† The middle state cannot be called *the sanctuary* of God, but rather, as it were, the outer porch of His Tem-

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\* Reflections on Death. Chap. xix.

† The white robes which metaphorically express the *purity* of the saints in paradise, are spoken of in reference to a Jewish custom, but the simile has no allusion to their immortality.

pie." *The Highest Heaven* is his sanctuary, not *Hades*, and we shall not enter into the first till we have left the latter. The glories of an *everlasting* triumph cannot surely be said to commence till after the judgment, when *the whole* of our nature shall have triumphed over death, and our Redeemer calls to his servants to enter heaven along with him.

In an account of the Bishop's life by his widow, the place to which it is probable his soul went is much more correctly stated, for she says that *he* was removed to *Paradise*; very properly considering *the soul* after death as *the man*, not *the body*, as many seem to do, from the way they speak; but this lady may not have meant the middle state, but considered paradise, as most people believe, heaven itself. Mrs. Heber adds, that his spirit—"perhaps was at that moment looking down with fond pity on the exertions of those, who would fain have recalled it to its earthly habitation, to endure again the trials and temptations of the world it had quitted."

That the departed souls of men, when they have reached either of the mansions of Hades, can see what is doing on the earth, we have not any grounds whatever for supposing. But they must have hourly intelligence by reports of the departed souls as they arrive from the earth. They are completely removed from the sight or sound of all which is done under the sun upon this transient stage of human existence.

The following passage from a lately published sermon, assumes the belief here controverted, in a very confident manner:—"It is not more certain than that we are here assembled, a set of living worshippers in the temple of the Almighty, than it is, that since we began to assemble here, more than five thousand human beings have been separated from their dying bodies, and gone to render up an account of their faith and works before the tribunal of that God whom we have been adoring. Nay, during the brief space which I have been employed in the mere statement of this single fact, it is equally certain that perhaps one hundred beings like ourselves have been called from time to eternity, and from trial to judgment, and from the chequered scenes of this

poor miserable earth, either to *the glories of heaven*, or to *the agonies of hell*.”\*

Dr. Beveridge, Bishop of St. Asaph, in his *Private Thoughts on Religion*, states his conviction, that his soul, at the very moment of death, shall immediately mount up to the tribunal of the Most High God, there to be judged, first privately by itself, (or perhaps with some other souls that shall be summoned to appear before the throne at the same time,) and then after undergoing such a trial, every soul that ever was or shall be separated from the body, must be received into either the happy or miserable region of *Hades*, there to remain until the judgment of the great day, when it shall receive its final doom, reunited to its body.

Here, the first judgment is only supposed to precede an entrance into the middle state, which this Divine distinctly recognizes, and believes that another and much more public and solemn one must decide on our eternal fate,—on our admission into heaven or hell: into neither of which does he believe any have as yet gone. But this preliminary judgment is here only fancied *probable*, and Christ must, in such a case, have been sitting on his tribunal ever since the death of Abel, and to continue so till the last day, when the general one is to be held,—insuperable objections to which could easily be shown.

In a letter to the Rev. Dr. Inglis of Edinburgh, from the Rev. Alexander Duff, one of the Missionaries from the Church of Scotland to the East Indies, the writer gives an account of their shipwreck, and says, in reference to his fellow-passengers:—“The spectacle was awfully solemn; preparation for an immediate appearance before the judgment-seat seemed to engross the whole soul.”† This confidence in *immediately going to our account* at death is, indeed, extremely common among all denominations, and with the ancient heathens, it was quite orthodox to believe that the soul went straight before the judges of the infernal regions.

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\* From a Sermon by the Rev. C. Benson, A.M. Master of the Temple, &c. Published in *The Pulpit*, No. 375. 3d May, 1830.

† See Edinburgh Courant, 5th July, 1830.

\* In a work lately published under the title of *Recognition in the world to come*, &c. by C. R. Muston, A. M. we find numerous instances in which the author is led into the strangest inconsistencies and misconceptions, by overlooking what was the plain belief of the Jews as to a middle state, and its being confirmed by the Christian Revelation. This author admits the continued consciousness of the soul, and that it instantly goes at death to a particular place. "We are," he says, "assured that heaven is the appointed rendezvous, the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Thither the disembodied spirits of the just are gone already, and to the same abode are all good men advancing on the swift and certain wings of time." p. 77. He speaks of the saints in heaven as disembodied spirits, which certainly they are, if these departed souls of men are now in fact there, and he calls their abode "*the mansion or state of disembodied spirits*;" as authority for which, he refers us to a very learned commentator: on a reference to whom, we find that this place is called *Hades*, and stated to be neither the scene of eternal happiness nor punishment,—neither heaven nor hell, but a general mansion appointed for spirits while they continue for a time separate from their bodies. In page 100, the same writer speaks (on the authority of one of the Prophets and of an Evangelist commenting on his words) regarding "*the region of separate spirits*," as the country in which they are detained captives by the king of terrors; and in accordance with the same imagery, their resurrection, or *release* from his dominion, is described under the figure of returning to the land of their nativity. "We have reason," he says, "to infer that all the faithful, who, like Rachael, are weeping over the death of their infant offspring, or the remains of departed worth, shall find these dissevered bands renewed on *the day of redemption*, when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." p. 101. Now, first, it is said here, that some disembodied souls are in heaven,—then the mansion they reside in is not heaven, but a place where they are de-

tained captives by the power of death, out of which they shall be delivered on the last day. Surely death cannot be said to keep dominion over *those who are in heaven*. At one time, Mr. M. describes the souls of the good in heaven, as having *already* triumphed over death, and at another, as being only in the region of souls, and their triumph deferred till the day of judgment !

The same author sometimes supposes the recognition of departed friends to take place immediately on death ; and in other places, "the bands of dissevered affection" are not (as above quoted) "to be renewed till the day of redemption." Generally keeping, however, to the souls of good men going instantly to the highest heaven, he naturally infers that in this case there must be a judgment on each at death, and then boldly pronounces, as the Church of Rome does, that the day of judgment we read of, is not in fact the one in which our sentences are pronounced, but merely one when a tribunal will be held to *justify* all the decisions of Christ, which he "*has already pronounced, and has already begun to carry into execution*, even from the moment of the death of the person whose lot it decides." To such unsupported assertions are those driven who inculcate the instant and direct transition from this life to heaven or to hell ! With an unaccountable inconsistency, Mr. M. immediately after, quotes the general sentences of the last day, which *are to be pronounced then for the first time*, and both good and bad are to be then carried to places where we have no certain evidence that they had ever been before, at least none that they had only just before come out of them, for the Judge is not to say *return*, but *enter ye blessed*, &c.

Alluding to a deceased friend, Dr. Kennedy prays—"may his soul *have been saved* by the blood of Christ."\* In Holy Writ, souls are not said to be *saved* until the day of the Lord Jesus,†—the last day ; and they cannot surely be thought to be so until they be tried and sentence passed. The sect de-

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\* Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron. Appendix, p. 441.

† 1 Cor. v. 5.



nominated *Swedenborgians*, hold that the day of judgment is *already past*,\* but, as we believe the last day is synonymous with it, and not yet come, we must rather agree with Dr. Kennedy, where he says, in another place of his Book, that—“*The real state of the case can only be known at the last day*”—that is, as to the confirmation of their eternal state, and being put into possession of their promised inheritance.

While not a few believe that men, even while in this life, are inevitably predestinated to a heavenly residence or doomed to hell—others hold that their day of account and reckoning—the time when they shall be judged and sentenced, is not to be till death,—and a third opinion refers to many explicit declarations of Scripture, that none are to be judged until the last day, emphatically there termed *the* day of judgment. God foreknows what events shall happen, yet we are not, like Turkish predestinarians, to consider all earthly results as entirely beyond our most strenuous efforts to influence, and believe that what happens to us would do so whatever exertions we made to prevent it. We ought to remember that we have many scriptural instances wherein God altered his previous determination in consequence of prayers and entreaties when joined with repentance; so he may, in like manner, alter his intentions from subsequent transgression. The forgiveness and acceptance of God are clearly conditional, and He is the only judge whether or not the conditions have been fulfilled in so far as that his mercy may be extended to us conformably to his promise. We cannot here, therefore, decide on our own cases, or expect direct revelations of the will of heaven as to our own individual fates, but may be certain that faith and repentance, proved as they should be, will avail if we faint not in well doing. Although God foresees in the spirit of prophetic mystery who shall be the future inhabitants of heaven, yet the Scripture excludes no man from effectual repentance and forgive-

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\* Evans' Sketch of the denominations of the Christian world, p. 265. 12th edit.

ness, if he will answer the call made upon him, so as to avail himself of the general promise held out to all. While a man lives, therefore, there is hope for him, and although even those whom heaven accepts, continue in some degree subject to the frailties of our nature, yet they strive to become sinless and trust in the great expiation. We cannot now avoid death—that separation between soul and body, as long as this world exists; but our original destination is still held out to us, not as a merited reward to either our faith or works, nor indeed as a reward at all (though it appears to be sometimes spoken of as such) but to the mediation of One great and Divine Being, when we agree to accept it as offered, and continue stedfast. Those whom God visibly favours, by taking them away when children, removing them from all temptation and liability to commit crime, have neither faith nor works to plead, and yet—"of such is the kingdom of heaven."

It is joyous to live when young life flatters much,

But why wish to stay to be bent o'er a crutch?

O! many a sad and a sorrowful day.

They escape from, who glide hence the soonest away!

Were even the Almighty to communicate to man while he is in life on earth, that he shall certainly ultimately get to the highest heaven—however confident he may feel of an entrance there for his eternal abode, still, this would not prove (admitting, for a moment, such an intimation has been made to him) that he shall be admitted *immediately upon death*, and without an immortal body, or that he shall not be required to appear at the great judgment, when all (we are assured) must be at least openly acknowledged or rejected, and a universal assembling is to take place previous to our being led into heaven in the train of the Head of the Christian Church.

The Rev. E. Bickersteth\* affords another example of this unfounded assertion of a judgment at death, in his recent

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\* Rector of Watton, Hertfordshire.

work, entitled *The chief concerns of man for time and eternity* ; but it is seldom necessary to go beyond such an author's own writings in order to show that his arguments are untenable, for he frequently admits so by other statements incompatible with them ; and the truth generally forces itself upon him, although he himself cannot see it distinctly for the darkness with which he endeavours to envelope it.—“When the spirit returns to God,” says Mr. B. “*an immediate sentence goes forth, deciding its condition for ever.*” There are two, and but two distinct abodes for the spirit in the regions of the departed, abodes in which each must dwell till the general resurrection of all flesh *at the last day.*” —“There is the abode of the last ; there are the spirits in prison,\* along with the angels that sinned, cast down into hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”†—“When the soul of the wicked leaves its body, and has received sentence from God, it is immediately consigned to the regions of woe.” p. 53. In the preceding quotation made by this author from St. Peter, the prison is clearly a place of *confinement*, where its inmates are *reserved* unto the judgment, that awful sentence by God, which is to *precede* execution. In this, Mr. B. agrees a few pages farther on, and that the last day, the time when it shall be pronounced, *is not yet come.* “O, my brethren, often realise the circumstances of that day ! Let us place before our eyes that great event, ‘*when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him ; when he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations.*’† You and I shall be there,” &c.—

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\* 1 Pet. iii. 19.

† 2 Pet. ii. 4.

‡ That the manner of judgment at the last day shall be in the least similar to earthly judicatories, there can be no rational expectation, although we find *similies* descriptive of it taken from the solemnities of the Jewish Sanhedrim, such as referring to books. Among the Jews too, it was a usual custom for a priest to sound a trumpet in order to call the people together from their labours—to announce the commencement and termination of the Sabbath, and for other purposes. It is in allusion to this, that a trumpet is spoken of as to be sounded at the last day. To suppose, however, that an angel shall

“The Scriptures frequently speak of him as presiding over all the stupendous scenes of this day.” p. 97. It might have been added, that they never speak of his presiding over a judgment on any other day, far less that he was *constantly* to sit as our judge from the moment he left the earth until all be decided.

Mr. Bickersteth, in short, begins by asserting what he shows no authority for, and then speaks of an event *as present*, which he afterwards refers to *a future time*, when he himself is to be there. Whether departed souls are conscious of the passing time, is not here the question in dispute, but Mr. B. admits that, when the body is mingled with the earth, “the spirit lives,” and “there is no sleep of the soul.”

We have not in the whole Gospel a more full or clear account of the process of the judgment, than that which is given us by our Saviour, in the 25th chap. of St. Matthew, which confirms all which has been here advanced. The charitable are there represented as surprised that the Judge should reward them for actions which they were not conscious of having performed : And how shall we account for this surprise, if they had long since received their full recompense for these very acts of charity ? Why do they at the day of judgment, after the general resurrection, stand then before the throne ? Why is their reward said *then* to be allotted, if they are on that day admitted into the participation of no other glory than that with which they were before glorified ?

We learn from St. Jude that the sublimity of the scene at the judgment, was very early revealed to the world ; for Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it, saying ;—“ Behold ! the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all that are ungodly ”\*—“ But

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then actually blow a trumpet to assemble us all, is as improbable as that disembodied saints shall literally play on stringed instruments in paradise, where they are represented in metaphor as having golden harps. We cannot yet conceive the real nature of the tremendous call to judgment.

\* Verses 14, 15.

the day of the Lord will come—in the which the heavens shall pass away,” &c.

In the 20th chap. of the Book of Revelation, the Judgment is spoken of as taking place at a time long subsequent to that when the saints are said to have been clothed in white robes after death. “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the Books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it,† and death and hell (*Hades*) delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works.” This vision is evidently intended to be understood as prophetic, to happen at some future time, as visions and dreams commonly were, when sent by God for any special purpose. No person can understand it as a scene which *had* passed or was passing at the time the Apostle saw the representation, in his sleep or trance.

*The British Critic* or *Theological Review* thus ably argues some of the points we have just been discussing :—“The argument that an intermediate state of hope and fear would forestal the judgment of the last day ; that the solemnities of Christ’s tribunal would be rendered nugatory by the previous knowledge of our fate ; that it is strangely absurd to suppose, that men should first undergo their sentence, and afterwards be brought to trial ; that they should first enter on their reward or punishment, and then, perhaps many centuries after, should be judged, acquitted or con-

\* By *the heavens*, in this place, must be meant merely the aerial heavens ; not the highest heavens, nor even the distant regions of space. See chap. xv. of this work.

† Bishop Horsley thinks this refers more to those who were destroyed at the deluge, than to the comparatively small numbers who have casually lost their lives by shipwreck, or otherwise, whose mortal remains lie in the sea ; but the multitudes which have perished in the waters since then have been so immense, *when taken altogether*, that the expression would rather seem not merely to refer to the antediluvians alone.

demned. All this, to be sure, when thus represented, does look exceedingly perplexing ; and yet viewed a little more closely, we can discern nothing in it to shake the convictions of those who expect to emerge at once from the shadow of death into the serenity of the blessed expectation, or the ' darkness visible ' of terror and dejection. The condition of one who dies in his sins, and awakes to a sense of the retribution that awaits them, may, not inaptly, be compared to that of a criminal who is committed to goal for trial, without the slightest hope of escaping conviction. It could hardly be said of such a person that his fear and anguish there would forestal the solemnities of justice, and render nugatory the subsequent administration and execution of the law. The forms and proceedings of earthly justice do not, indeed, provide a precisely similar illustration to the case of those who have persevered in well doing ; but nevertheless, we are unable to comprehend, why the analogy should not likewise be extended to them. What is there unreasonable in the surmise, that a righteous man may awaken from death to that full assurance of acquittal and acceptance which some have affirmed to be attainable even in the present life ? Why may he not be placed in a state of which the enjoyment shall consist in the knowledge that his trials and agitations are at an end, that the forgiveness of his sins is finally sealed, and that a reward will at some period be assigned him, proportioned to his faithfulness, by the infallible wisdom and goodness of his judge ? "

Suppose the sentence of a prisoner here was to be removal to a distant land,—the state he must find himself in there, could not be said to *commence* when he was in confinement here waiting for his *trial*, and this is the precise situation of *all* souls in Hades. They there but await the judgment which shall admit them for ever into a far happier place, or else doom them to one of torment, in which the body will bear its full share.

Suppose, farther, that the whole inhabitants of a town

were to be told that they should all be tried together on a certain day, by a judge who should arrive in great splendour, but that they should be previously taken, when their several appointed times of probation are ended, and put into confinement preparatory to the court sitting, and judged of according as they had behaved up to the time of being deprived of their liberty ; it might therefore be said in one sense, that their fate was fixed at this removal from a freedom of acting, but it would not be actually or definitely so till their trial. The best of us will have to trust to the mercy and forgiveness of God, and consequently *all* may have *some* hopes till the last, that at least some mitigation of the worst may be conceded to them ; that hopes will be so entertained (however slight in some cases) is rendered probable from what is actually disclosed ; for some of the wicked are represented as pleading their cause, and being answered—“*Depart—I know ye not, ye workers of iniquity.*” In such a supposed earthly case, the judge might delegate his power, so that every individual might be tried by himself when his days of liberty were ended ; but, if that judge had promised to come himself in person, it might suit his purposes much better to find all ready to be tried together, and which would render the day of his arrival, and the greatness of his proceedings vastly more important ;—a consideration which may be extended in its application to the judgment of the last day.

The believers, in a private judgment at death, have never attempted to invest it with any pomp or ceremony, such as is to be attendant on the other, when we “shall see the Son of man coming in the glory of his Father.”\* How can those who believe the court for trial and sentencing of souls is now going on with its eternal decisions, explain why the Scriptures always tell us of its only *commencing* its sitting at the last day ? What took place in the case of those souls which were freed from mortal dwellings during the thirty-three years in which the Judge of all was a man amongst us, might become a question of inconceivable solution for those

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\* See Matt. xxv. 31. 34.; xvi. 27.; xxiv. 30.—Tit. ii. 30.

who believe in a constant judgment as long as the earth shall endure. To obviate the difficulty, they may argue that the personal residence here of Christ would not interfere with his divine character as judge, because, although the deity appeared as man, yet his power, &c. had undergone no diminution; or, in other words, that Christ, *as God*, was present where the judgment is held, judging the souls as they arrived, while he was present on earth *as man*. I have formerly made some remarks on the Omnipresence of our Lord, so I shall only add here, that our faith is nowhere called on in Scripture to believe that he was judging any where while he was seen on earth, or any other Power in his place, and he himself expressly told us, that he then came to judge no man.

St. Matthew, speaking of the last day, says, that its precise time was not told: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not even the angels of heaven, but the Father only,"\* and it is added by St. Mark, "neither the Son."† —"Now, by *that day and hour*," as Bishop Tillotson says, (and nothing can be more clear,) "is meant that famous and terrible time of the general judgment of the world, which St. Peter, by way of eminency, calls 'the day of the Lord.'"<sup>‡</sup>

"But, after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against *the day of wrath* and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."§—"In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."|| Here, if St. Paul had thought that salvation would be definitely made certain before the day of judgment, either by a sentence or without one, it is most likely he would have said so, which he is so far from doing, that every allusion which he makes to the judgment may fairly be held to imply the contrary. In the second Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle assures us, (in the words of Dr. Macknight's translation,) that "we must all ap-

\* Matt. xxv. 36.

† Chap. xiii. 32.

‡ Sermon X.

§ Rom. ii. 5.

|| Rom. ii. 16.



pear before the tribunal of Christ, that every one may receive things *in the body*, according to what he hath done.”\*—Now here is a direct intimation that the body is to be present at the judgment, a fact also established in different parts of the New Testament, and if we had no plain intimation of it, it would seem strange, if the soul alone, without the body, (when they are to be rejoined,) were to be tried and judged for deeds done *in the body*, and then a second time brought before the judge to be tried over again, or to have the first sentence justified *after their reunion!*

As St. Paul, in his address to the Athenians, and in many other places, testified that there is one only day or time appropriated for judging the world, which may be ages yet distant, *there must be a middle state* for the souls of the deceased to abide in during their separation from the body, unless it be believed that when the body dies, the soul dies too, (or rather is annihilated for a time,) and this, it has been proved, shall not be the case.

Even were it certain that there is a judgment at death, and that the one at the last day is only to be a confirmation or justification of the other, or however the most obvious sense of many texts may be ingeniously explained, so as to represent them as capable of bearing a different meaning from what they seem to do,—still, it would not of itself prove that the separate soul, in consequence, entered either into the highest heaven or the hell of torments, but simply that there was a trial of it previous to being admitted into Hades, in order that its proper place there might be assigned to it. But, if, on the other hand, it is established that no judgment whatever is to take place till the last day, then, as certainly have none of the human kind yet entered heaven, except perhaps a very few, out of due course, and on some special account, having also again received material bodies as a necessary previous qualification among those whose only title to that high reward is from their being men

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\* Chap. v. 10. A similar text will be found in Rom. xiv. 10. and another at verse 12.

redeemed in consequence of having accepted the conditions of the offer made to all.

If there were a judgment at death, and another at the last day, the first would be by far the most important one to us, except to those who, from not having died, were then judged for the first time, so it would be a real judgment to some, but only a ratification to others.

Dr. Sherlock, in his *Practical Discourse concerning a Future Judgment*, says—"And the truth is, if all men have a final sentence passed on them, as soon as they go into the other world, it is very unaccountable, why Christ at the last day shall come with such a terrible pomp and solemnity to judge and condemn those who are judged, and condemned, and executed already as much as they ever can be."

The author of *Natural History of Enthusiasm* notices that—"one commanding subject pervades the Scriptures, and rises to view on every page:—this recurring theme, towards which all instructions and histories tend, is the great and anxious question of condemnation or acquittal at the bar of God, when the irreversible sentence shall come to be pronounced."—The same author afterwards refers to the dreadful convulsions of the earth which shall precede the judgment, and goes on thus:—"Then the bright appearance of the judge, encircled by the splendours of the court of heaven;—the convoked assemblage of witnesses from all worlds, filling the concave of the skies.\* Then the dense masses of the family of man crowding the arena of the great tribunal;—the separation of the multitude;—the irreversible sentence;—the departure of the doomed;—the triumphant ascent of the ransomed."† Here, revelation is held to indicate past

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\* This is going rather beyond the letter of the Record, where there is nothing said which would indicate that the inhabitants of other worlds, (except the angels of heaven,) are to be present at our trial, or are then themselves to be judged, and so far from filling the vast concave of the skies, it is probable that the inhabitants of the next star (if it is inhabited) shall know nothing of such an event.

† Pp. 45. 53.

dispute, that the great decision on our fate is not to be until the last day : None of these events are at this moment taking place : There are none such constantly transacting, as a judgment at death would necessarily infer.

There is therefore no decision on our eternal doom, or with which, at least, we shall be made acquainted, until the great day of judgment ; and if there has been no trial, then there is no sentence, nor execution of one, and whatever may be the joy or sorrow of the separate soul, it is not that bliss or woe which we are told is to follow the judgment, nor is it to be experienced in the same place, since the Scriptures make a distinction, not only in name, but in various particulars regarding them.

It is said that "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into *heaven* ;"\* but this was a mode of expression agreeable to the popular belief that the state of the departed blessed is now *in the material and visible heavens*. "Heaven" may not here be meant to signify that region (wherever it may be in the immeasurable creation of God) which is intended for the eternal residence of the saints, which was denominated the third or highest heavens. If Christ's declaration to Nicodemus is to be strictly interpreted—that no man had at that time ascended up to heaven, then Elijah had not gone thither. But then this prophet did not depart by a natural course, and took his human body with him, (although it may probably have undergone its *change* by the way,) so he has no resurrection to look to ; he being therefore in a more fit condition for the highest heaven than a disembodied soul. It is also said—"David is not yet ascended into the heavens."† His soul, consequently, must abide in some separate region. Although the souls of the departed just may be in happiness, or *in glory*, we must not think they are necessarily in the highest heaven, for Moses and Elias were both said to have appeared *in glory* on the top of a mountain in Palestine, which assuredly could not be called *heaven*.

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\* 2 Kings ii. 11.

† Acts ii. 34.

They were not merely seen from the place where the disciples stood, as at a distance, or in a vision, or as St. Stephen saw the Son of man just before his own death, but these two prophets were actually present and were heard talking with Jesus. A great light or glory also shone around St. Paul at his conversion, from within which our Lord was heard to speak.

That the righteous have *already* received their great reward, is directly refuted by St. Luke recording the words of our Saviour on one occasion, which would seem to be conclusive of the question. "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed *at the resurrection of the just*:"\* evidently meaning *not till then*, except in the approval of a man's own conscience.

The happiness of heaven and the misery of hell are represented *as complete*,—that of *soul and body*.† But until the last day, the body is subject to corruption. Previously, then, to the resurrection, the righteous and the wicked cannot be in heaven and hell. Their respective states at present must be different in their nature from the places of final destination.

When one asked our Lord if only a few would be saved, it is plain from his answer, as given by the same disciple, that the time for entering heaven is only to be at the last day, and that it is not till then that the Master of the house shall rise up and shut the door. "Then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," but he answers, saying to those without, "depart," &c. It is *then* there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth, and that others shall come from the east, and from the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.‡

\* Luke xiv. 14.

† Matt. iv. 14, &c.—2 Thess. i. 7, '8, 9.—1 Cor. xv. 52, 53, 54.—Phil. iii. 20, 21.—1 Thess. iv. 14, &c.

‡ Luke xiii. 23, &c.

In the parable of the tares and the wheat, these were to be allowed to grow up together *until the harvest*, which means that the good and the bad were to continue together until then, and it seems to put off the final separation till the judgment of the last day, when the same authority informs us, that the angels, as reapers, shall divide them. It is quite plain that the harvest is not meant to be reaped *at the death of each individual*, although, in the parable of Lazarus and Dives, there does appear to be a distinction and separation made, but they are there said to be within sight of each other, and the division afterwards must be infinitely wider and more complete, inasmuch as heaven and the place of eternal torment or of outer darkness must be greatly more distant from each other than are the happy and unhappy regions of *Hades*. The very sight of the righteous in this latter place, and the prospect of a still greater difference between the condition of the evil doers and the good, may form no inconsiderable part of the misery which may naturally arise to the wicked in that state, merely from their consciences and the prospect before them. The separating "*at the end of the world*" may be said to allude only to those alive upon earth, who are of course mixed together, good and bad; and to join the one side, may be brought the souls from Paradise, and for the other, those from Tartarus; thus the separation would become a general one, and on considering the above, along with many other texts, which make no limitation, but seem to include *all* of each description, we may in this way explain the separation mentioned in Holy Writ, with the fact also there stated, of there being already a separation in so far between disembodied souls. The final separation, too, shall be between just and wicked *men*,—the one which exists at present is only between the souls of men. It is then that *He* shall separate all nations as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; setting the one description on his right hand, and the other on his left. "*Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand—'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit*

the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' \*\*

St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Thessalonians,† thus informs them of what shall take place at the resurrection, according to Dr. Macknight's translation :—"We affirm to you, by command of the Lord, that we the living, who remain at the coming of the Lord, shall not anticipate them who are asleep ; for the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Afterwards we, the living, who remain, shall at the same time with them be caught up in clouds, to join the Lord in the air, and so we shall be for ever with the Lord." In our common versions, the Greek word *προβλεπωμεν* is rendered *present*, by which the translators meant the same as *anticipate*. Bishop Tillotson explains the passage—"we shall not be taken up into heaven before the saints which are already dead shall be raised."‡ That is, the earthly bodies of those departed when joined to their souls. The whole passage clearly establishes that they are not yet in heaven, and are at *the last day* to ascend thither for the *first* time.

There is a passage in the Revelation of St. John, the import of which may at least be allowed to contribute to elucidate the condition or present state of departed souls, in as far as it seems to show that they are not yet in the place of their final reward. It is as follows :—"I saw under the altar§ the souls of them that were slain for the word of

\* Matt. xxv. 31. 34.

† Chap. iv. 15. 17.

‡ 11th Sermon.

§ In the Jewish temples, *under the altar* was held as a place of sanctuary. A person was there considered to be under the protection of the temple ; and this expression in the text would therefore merely indicate to the Jews to whom it was addressed, that the souls spoken of were under the special protection of Christ. Their state is also described by St. John in these words :—"Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in His temple, and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them." The heavenly Personage here denominated *God*, is, no doubt, Christ himself, as several other passages seem also to establish. He is often called so, and de-

God, and for the testimony which they held : And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto them, that they should *rest* yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.”\* This is from a Book of visions, and this place among others might be explained as a mere vision of the Apostle, if there were no other text which confirmed the doctrine of a separate state, but since there are so many evident proofs of it in the Holy Writings, this text should be explained at least nearer to the literal sense of it than those will allow who suppose that the soul sleeps for a time after death, or that it goes immediately to the scene of its promised great reward.

Even admitting that it may have been but a dream, still, we know that God often chose such a time to communicate many things to our spirits, both in words and by representations of events themselves. It surely must therefore be admitted that the Almighty might have shown to a soul when its body was in a trance or asleep, what was passing in the world of departed souls, or even in heaven itself, without its being actually there, although I can see nothing improbable in the soul being really carried thither while the body was unconscious, for the animal life of our frames—their principle of *life*, is not the soul.

“After this I beheld, and lo ! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands.†

scribed as being now at the head of the departed saints, as Abraham was said to have been in the Old Testament dispensation, and up to the death of Christ. God is here called on *to judge* ; now we know that all judgment was given to the Son, who must therefore be the Person of the Trinity more immediately addressed.

\* Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11.

† Rev. vii. 9.

This is probably prophetic of what is yet to come to pass, but there is nothing in it to render it impossible to be understood as referring to the present state of the souls in paradise, where the Lamb is now at the head of his saints, and may often visit them with the brightness of his glory, to allay their impatience for their final triumph, and to tell them that their great reward is not to be yet, as they must wait for their fellow saints from the earth. All that the palms and white robes import, it is not given us now to understand. We know that among all nations they have been used as ensigns of joy, and are here evidently employed metaphorically to express their happy condition. To *exactly* comprehend their enjoyments and pleasures in paradise or in heaven, we must be endowed with enlarged faculties, but in speaking of them, similies might be borrowed from earthly scenes without their being understood to convey any thing but metaphorical representation. At the same time I may remark, that as we are not left in total ignorance of the condition of the spirits in the intermediate state, it is our own fault if we remain so, but there is a limit to our researches when we wish to learn this too minutely.

“And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was *Death*, and *Hell* (*Hades* in the original) followed with him.”\*

“*Death* and *Hell* (*Hades*) delivered up the dead that were in them.”† “And *death* and *hell* (*Hades*) were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death.”‡

“These passages,” says Bishop Hobart, “are very bold and sublime personifications. In the first, *hell*, the place of departed spirits, follows *death*, denoting that immediately after the body becomes subject to the dominion of *death*, *hell*, or the invisible place, receives the soul.

“But it is declared in the second passage, *death* shall deliver up the bodies, and *hell* the spirits that were subject to their dominion, and

“As it is announced in the last verse, *Death*, as well as

\* Rev. vi. 8.

† Rev. xx. 13.

‡ Rev. xx. 14.



hell, the place of the departed, shall be destroyed.”—Furnishing incontrovertible proof that hell is applied to the place of the departed spirits, as shown by Dr. Campbell.”\*

Dr. Doddridge also considers *hell* in these passages as denoting merely *the separate state*, and Dr. Scott unequivocally declares his belief in its existence as thus explained. He paraphrases these texts :—“The grave and separate state will give up the bodies and souls that are in them.” “Then death and hell—the *grave* and *separate state* (represented as two persons) will be cast into the Lake of Fire ; that is, they shall subsist no longer to receive the bodies and the souls of men.”

“And I saw thrones, and they that sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them : and *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded* for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.”† This appears more clearly than the last to refer to souls in *the middle state*, and may have been intended to intimate, (as seems the most plain interpretation) that even before they again resume bodies as habitations, they will be perfectly visible, at least to each other ; and that some spiritual beings will have dominion or charge over them, which the original seems to imply ; not that in the middle state they shall be subject to *judgment or trial*. Even, then, all shall not be on a level, but shall be held in consideration according to some rule of which we as yet know little, but we do know that in our well regulated earthly places of confinement before trial, there are classifications, and wards for different descriptions of prisoners, where they can live with very different degrees of happiness or misery. In all such situations a clear or an upbraiding conscience will contribute greatly to their pleasure or pain : the soul can then await its time of trial with more composure and hope ; while those prisoners who can only look back on days misspent—on opportunities of repentance thrown away—on sinful indulgences, and general reprobate conduct—can have nothing but woe for their portion in their place of confinement, were

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\* Hobart's *State of the Departed*.

† Rev. xx. 4.

it even a palace, instead of being able to enter into the peace and rest of the righteous.

*The British Critic or Theological Review* is of opinion, that it would not be "safe or judicious to seek in the mystic visions of the Apocalypse for any *conclusive* proof that the souls of men are translated *immediately* to a state of partial and prelusive reward or punishment. The scenes there disclosed are altogether of so figurative a character, that they may be regarded rather as symbolical adumbrations, than as accurate exhibitions of future events. If we are to give a literal sense to the passage which represents the souls of the martyrs as crying to God to avenge his church, it will perhaps be difficult to withhold the same mode of interpretation from those parts of the Book which speak of white robes, and crowns of gold, and celestial harps, and gates of pearl, and pavements of pure gold transparent as crystal. The Apostle himself tells us, that the phials of odours are only emblems of the prayers of the saints; it is, therefore, highly probable, that the other particulars of the mysterious spectacle may admit of a similar interpretation. The cry of the martyred spirits for vengeance may, for instance, be just as figurative as the cry of the blood of Abel 'from the ground.' It may signify no more than that the death and sufferings of the martyrs were constantly present to the Divine Mind—that their cause was never absent from his remembrance—and that, in his own time, he would signally vindicate the church for which they bled."\*

These are very sensible and judicious observations, but although many of the descriptions alluded to cannot be taken in *every particular* in a literal manner, and are evidently in so far told in figurative language, yet there can be as little doubt that these descriptions refer to the state of separate souls which are *now* conscious in a middle state, and to what shall be hereafter. There are other parts of the New Testament also where we must not consider every thing strictly according to the literal sense of the words,

and yet, allowing for the use of metaphor, the true meaning may be sufficiently seen. We are not called on to believe, for instance, from the parable of Dives and Lazarus, that souls are burning in real material flames (and we have no idea of any other) more than that they have fingers and tongues, or that a drop of water would cool or mitigate their distress; but that disembodied spirits are capable of feeling mental pain or woe is certain on the authority of Scripture. The Reviewer's opinion is no more than prudently cautious in not considering the doctrine of a middle abode for us, as established decisively by any passages in so mystical a Book as that of the Revelation, but then we must take into account that they are corroborated by all the passages throughout the whole Bible which make any allusion to a future state—all agreeing with a beautiful consistency when fairly examined—all being capable of plain and direct interpretations—whereas, by any other, the meaning of many of them must be twisted into unnatural senses, while some will admit of no common sense explanation, but stand in opposition to each other in any endeavour to support from them either that the soul sleeps, or goes direct to heaven, or to the hell of eternal pain.

The following texts of Scripture contribute to confirm the doctrine, that no trial or sentence or execution has as yet passed.

“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof *in the day of judgment.*”\* “Judge nothing *before the time*, until the Lord come.”† “And behold they cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us *before the time?*’‡ “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”§ *When is this to be?* “On the day of the Lord.” It also appears that the fallen angels themselves are not yet in the place of punishment deserved by

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\* Matt. xii. 36.

† 1 Cor. iv. 5.

‡ Matt. viii. 29.

§ Matt. xii. 37.

their fall : “ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *hell*, and delivered them into chains of darkness *to be reserved unto judgment*.”\*—Here, what our translators render *cast down to hell*, is in the Greek *ταρταρος* (*Tartaros*) which the learned Grotius explains by saying, that the lowest part of every thing is called *tartara*, or *hell*; whether it be of the earth, or of the water, or of the air : and *γεεννα* (*Gehenna*) is the Greek word used in the New Testament to denote the place of eternal punishment. *Tartarus* being the division in *Hades*, or the intermediate state, appropriated for the wicked, as *Paradise* is for the good there. —“ To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”† Here St. Paul being angry with the Corinthians about suffering a certain guilty person to continue among them, commands them to excommunicate him, but still with a wish for his final salvation at the day of judgment. Now, if St. Paul had thought that his person would be judged immediately upon his death, he surely would have said that he might be saved when he *died*. “ For the Most High hateth sinners, and will repay vengeance unto the ungodly, and keepeth them unto the mighty day of their punishment.”‡ “ The wicked is reserved *to the day of destruction* : they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.”§

Jesus Christ, being a man, suffered death in his human nature ; that is, his soul and body were separated. The last lay in the tomb for a while like any other dead body, with this difference merely from others, that corruption touched it not. What became of his soul during this state of separation and death ? If we could discover this, then we may expect, as we are promised, that ours shall follow his steps. Did his spirit sleep unconsciously during his death, or go to *hades*, or to *heaven* ? The Apostles’ Creed affirms, that when his body was in the tomb—“ *he*,” that is, his

\* 2 Pet. ii. 4.

† 1 Cor. v. 5.

‡ Ecclesiasticus xii. 6.

§ Job xxi. 30.—See also 2 Pet. ii. 9.

soul, "*descended into hell*:" founding on a prophecy in the Old Testament, and on a reference in the New, to its fulfilment. Let us inquire into the meaning of this descent.

The question here turns on what is the true meaning of the word *hell*, for, that our Lord's soul did not continue in his dead body, but went to *some place* while his body lay dead, there can be no doubt. There are two general opinions—one, that he went to the region of departed spirits in the *middle state*; the other, that he descended to the hell of torments and final punishment.—The word used in the Hebrew to signify this last, and that in the Greek for the same, none dispute to mean this place, otherwise called *the lake of fire*. That text in the Old Testament, where it is prophesied Christ should go at death to a particular place, and those texts in the New, which speak of his having actually gone there, use a *different word* from what indisputably signifies the hell of torments. Now those who insist that these two *different* words have *the same* meaning, never endeavour to *prove* this assertion by arguments, tending to show the meanings evidently attached to them by the sacred writers, or those which were clearly the common understanding at the time. The doom attached to original sin was toil, sorrow, and death; the last meaning a separation of soul and body; and this doom our Lord, as man, underwent.\* There was no punishment in a hell of torments,—in that place denominated the lake of fire, at first annexed to a natural death, for this dread and eternal punishment was an additional threatening afterwards denounced against an evil life in each individual—no human being, either in the body or out of the body—alive or dead—has *as yet* undergone this punishment. No man shall even after the resurrection go to the lake of fire, who has led a good life on earth in faith—now Christ, as a man, led a perfectly blameless life. If he had gone to this place at death, as Calvin thought, he would have been punished beyond what was ever threatened against any man who should pass a just life in this world.

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\* See page 34 of this work.

But *all* men are subject to the punishment of death, and a *punishment* it certainly is to all, for we could have gone to heaven without so painful a step, as Enoch and Elijah did : so it is for *original sin*, and the taint it left behind, not for *individual sin*, that we die by the separation of soul and body, else spotless infants and just men would not so die.\* In consequence of Christ's soul bursting the bands of confinement in Hades—reanimating his body, and then ascending to heaven, so the just shall, through his merits, follow his course.

The *hell*, as our versions have it, or place to where our Lord's soul descended, is named in the Old Testament, *Sheol*, and in the New, *Hades*. The meaning of these two words, (which are by every critic admitted to be synonymous,) will decide this point of inquiry.

Archbishop Secker, in his "*Lectures on the Catechism*,"† explaining the descent into hell, observes, that "the most common meaning, not only among heathens, but Jews and the first Christians, of the word *Hades*, here translated *hell*, was in general that *invisible world* one part or another of which the souls of the deceased whether good or bad inhabit."

Bishop Horsley has a celebrated sermon illustrative of this descent. After showing that the word in the original cannot mean the hell of torment prepared for the evil angels and for wicked men, and that such is not his meaning while using the English term *hell*, he remarks :—"If the soul of Christ was not left in hell *at* his resurrection, then it *was* in hell *before* his resurrection. But it was not there either before his death or after his resurrection, for that was never imagined : therefore it descended into hell after his death and before his resurrection ; for as his flesh, by virtue of the Divine promise, saw no corruption, though it was in the

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\* As the separate soul continues conscious, natural death must always have been followed by mental pleasure or pain in one of the mansions of the middle state, but not that happiness in the highest heaven which the good shall yet enjoy, or that torment which the impenitent are warned of, is to befall them in the place of eternal pain—when the Judge shall say—"Depart," &c.

† Lecture IX.

grave, the place of corruption, where it remained until his resurrection, so his soul, which by virtue of the like promise was not left in hell, was *in* that hell where it was not *left* until the time came for its reunion to the body for the accomplishment of the resurrection."

"If we consider," says this able divine, in another place, "the words as they stand in the Creed itself, and in connexion with what immediately precedes and follows them, they appear evidently to contain a declaration of something which our Lord performed—some going of our Lord to a place called 'hell,' in the interval of time between the burial of his dead body and his rising to life again on the third day after that interment; for thus speaks the Creed:—'was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead.'—It is evident that the descending into hell is spoken of as an action of our Lord, but as an action performed by him after he was dead and buried, and before he rose again. *In the body* our dead Lord, more than any other man, could perform no action; for the very notion of death is, that all sensation and activity and power of motion is in that state of the man extinguished. This, therefore, was an act of that part of the man which continues active after death, that is, of the soul separated by death from the body, as the interment must be understood of the body apart from the soul. The dead body could no more go into hell than the living soul could be laid in the grave. Considering the words, therefore, as they stand in the Creed as the church now receives it, they seem as little capable of any variety of meaning, and almost as little to require explanation, as the word 'buried.' That word describes not more plainly, to the apprehensions of all men, what was done with the inanimate body of our crucified Lord, than these words declare what was done by his rational soul *in its intermediate state*. The only question that can possibly arise to a plain man's understanding is, *where or what the place may be which is here called HELL*, to which it is said our Lord in the state of death descended."

"The word *hell* is so often applied in common speech,

and in the English translation of the New Testament, to the place of torment, that the genuine meaning of the word (in which, however, it is used in many passages of the English Bible,) is almost forgotten.”—“But the word, in its natural import, signifies only that *invisible* place which is the appointed habitation of departed souls in the interval between death and the general resurrection. That such a place *must be*, is indisputable; for when man dieth, his soul dieth not, but returneth unto Him that gave it, to be disposed of at his will and pleasure—which is clearly implied in that admonition of our Saviour, ‘Fear not them which kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.’ But the soul, existing after death, and separated from the body, though of a nature immaterial, *must be in some place*; for however metaphysicians may talk of place, as one of the adjuncts of body, as if nothing but gross sensible body could be limited to a place, to exist without relation to place, seems to be one of the inconceivable perfections of the Divine Being, and it is hardly to be conceived that any created spirit, of however high an order, can be without locality; or without such determination of its existence to any given time to some certain place, that it shall be true to say of it, ‘Here it is, and not elsewhere.’” —“Assuming, therefore, that every departed soul has its place of residence, it would be reasonable to suppose, if Revelation were silent on the subject, that a common mansion is provided for them all, their nature being similar.”—“The name which the Hebrew writers gave to this mansion of departed souls (without regard to any division) expresses only that it is a place unknown, about which all are curious and inquisitive. The writers of the New Testament adopted the name which the earliest Greek writers had given it, which describes it by the single property of *invisibility*. But for the place of torment by itself, they had quite another appellation. The English word *hell*, in its primary and natural meaning, signifies nothing more than ‘the unseen and covered place,’ and is properly used both in the Old and the New Testament, to render the Hebrew word in the one, and the Greek word in the other, which denote the invisible



mansion of disembodied souls, without any reference to suffering. But being used also in the translation of the New Testament for that word which properly denotes the place of torment, the good sense of the word, if we may so call it, is unfortunately forgotten, and the common people know of no other hell but that of the burning lake.

“This certainly was *not* the hell to which the soul of Christ descended. He descended to hell properly so called,—to the invisible mansion of departed spirits, and to that part of it where the souls of the faithful, when they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity.”

“That the invisible place of their residence is the hell to which our Lord descended, is evident from the terms of his own promise to the repentant thief—Paradise was certainly some place where our Lord was to be on the very day on which he suffered, and where the companion of his sufferings was to be with him. It was not heaven,”\*—“and where *he* was not, the thief could not be with him.”\*—“It could be no other than that region of repose and rest where the souls of the righteous abide in joyful hope of the consummation of their bliss. And upon this single text, we might safely rest the proof of this article of our creed in the sense in which we explain it,—a sense so plain and prominent in the bare words, to every one who is not misled by the popular misapprehension of the word *hell*, that it never would have been set aside to make room for expositions of more refinement, much less would the authenticity of the article ever have been questioned, but for the countenance which it was supposed to give to the doctrine of purgatory as taught in the Church of Rome, with which, however, it has not even a remote connexion.”

Bishop Horsley adds, that this interpretation of the article in the creed—“is the only *literal* one which the words will bear, unless we admit the *extravagant* assertion, as to

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\* Some reasons are given here by Bishop H. which, as they have been already urged, I have omitted in this place.

me it seems, of the venerable Calvin, that our blessed Lord actually went down to the place of torment, and there sustained (horrible to think or mention) the pains of a reprobate soul in punishment,\* a notion evidently confuted by"—the reasons before adduced. The great use of this article is—"that it is a clear confutation of the dismal notion of death as a temporary extinction of the life of the whole man; or what is no less gloomy and discouraging, the notion of the sleep of the soul in the interval between death and the resurrection. Christ was made so truly man, that whatever took place in his human nature may be considered as a model and example of what must take place, in a certain due and proportionate degree, in every man united to him. His soul survived the death of his body: therefore shall the soul of every believer survive the body's death. Christ's disembodied soul descended into hell; thither, therefore, shall the soul of every believer in Christ descend.† In that place, the soul of Christ, in its separate state, possessed and exercised active powers: in the same place, therefore, shall the believer's soul possess and exercise activity. Christ's soul was not left in hell; neither shall the souls of his servants there be left but for a season. The appointed time will come, when the Redeemer shall say to his redeemed, 'Go forth.' "‡

In a note in Ridgeley's *Body of Divinity*, the American Editor, the Rev. Dr. P. Wilson, of the Presbyterian Church, states that the Greek words translated *hell* in the passage—

\* Bishop Hobart characterises this as "*an impious supposition*," adding, "for he declared, as matter of triumph and joy to the penitent thief, that they should be together in paradise."

State of the Departed.

† Every soul, whether good or bad, shall be removed (whether it can strictly be called *descending* or not) to one or other of the mansions in Hades, to remain there till the last day.

‡ This shall be at the last day, when Hades shall no longer confine souls, but its doors shall be flung open by divine command—the spirits shall be then conducted to the earth, where they shall be rejoined to their bodies, and then to judgment—heaven or hell following.

“thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,”—“are each taken for the invisible world, or *separate state of the good as well as evil*, both in the Old and New Testaments; and this was thought by Jews and Gentiles to be under the surface.” Christ’s descent into hell, he observes, therefore, means, that “his soul, when separated from his body, was immediately with the *separate spirits* who are happy, and so said to be in paradise. But whether above or below the surface is unimportant.”\*

In the Articles of Religion agreed to in 1552, the Third is in these words:—“As Christ died and was buried for us, so also it is to be believed that he went down into hell, for the body lay in the sepulchre until the resurrection, but his ghost departing from him, was with the ghosts who are in prison, or in hell, as the place of St. Peter doth testify.” The same belief is asserted in the Thirty-nine Articles of 1562 and 1571, embodying the faith and belief of the Church of England at this day, but the reference to St. Peter is withdrawn, for what Bishop Horsley thinks very insufficient reason.

In the Rubric before the Apostles’ Creed in the American Liturgy, it is very properly stated that the words—“*He went into the place of departed spirits*,” as they stand there, are considered as words of the same meaning with—“He descended into hell.” It would be well if, in our prayer-books, the proper meaning of this expression was also distinctly set down.

Bishop Pearson, Dr. Barrow, and Sir Peter King, (the last a distinguished layman of the English Church,) in their Expositions of the fifth Article of the Creed, also render it very clear, that those who inserted it, meant no such descent by it, as has been alleged by those who ignorantly fancy the place alluded to by the name of hell, to be the region of final punishment. Mr. Ricketts, after a very perspicuous exposition of the text we are commenting on, affirms that it is clear—“the soul of Christ went after he was dead, to

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\* American edit. Vol. II. p. 440--1. Note.

Hades or Hell, a place distinct from superficial earth—and also from heaven—to which place he ascended not until forty days after his resurrection. But a more detailed examination of the same passage in the Acts will further show, that this 'Hell' is in truth no other than the general receptacle of human souls.\* We ought, therefore, now, from all that has been said, to understand no more from it than that Christ went to *Hades*—to the invisible mansion for souls. If by *hell*, we refer to that Lake of fire into which the devil, his angels, and the souls of wicked men are to be cast *after judgment*, it follows plainly, from many considerations, that *this* place is not yet inhabited by any of these, and would be inconsistent were it otherwise, with the doctrine of a middle state, therefore our Lord's soul did not descend thither.

We come now to consider a passage in Scripture which has a good deal of apparent mystery attached to it, principally arising from the different interpretations it has received, but which the preceding discussion will materially assist us to understand. It has been established that the soul of our Lord went to Hades, and that this place contains two distinct districts, Paradise and Tartarus, in both of these the souls of the good and bad are confined for a time, but we may believe with the greatest strictness and rigour in the latter. That Christ's soul was in paradise with the good, has also been proved, but there is a text in St. Peter which would induce us to think he had been likewise in the other. Bishop Horsley takes it as the text of the sermon just referred to, and it will be found in 1 Pet. iii. 18—20.

“Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, *by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison*, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few—that is, eight souls—were saved by water, as baptism doth now save us, by the

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\* Rickett's Considerations, &c. p. 7.

resurrection of Jesus Christ ; who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God.”

It has much puzzled interpreters, in what sense Christ may be said *to have gone and preached* to those ancient rebels, who were destroyed by the flood ; whether he did it by his spirit working in Noah, as some have imagined ; this great man being a preacher of righteousness in those days ; but as Noah could not, as a man while alive, have preached to the souls or spirits after their bodies were drowned, and they themselves gone to the place of *safe keeping* in the world unseen, (which the word “*prison*” in the original merely signifies,) this interpretation is a very far fetched and improbable one,—or whether, during the period in which the body of Christ lay dead, his soul, on going to Hades, visited the spirits of those antediluvians in their separate state of imprisonment, on which some ground the mistaken notion of his descent to the hell of eternal torments, but let this be determined as it may, the most clear and easy sense of the Apostle, when he speaks of “*the spirits in prison*,” is, that the souls of those disobedient Beings, after their bodies were destroyed by the flood, were reserved in some place for a special and future design : and this is very parallel to the present circumstances of fallen angels. “The angels that kept not their first estate, he hath reserved in everlasting\* chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.”† and why may not the spi-

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\* The Hebrew and Greek words in the Scriptures which we translate *eternal* and *everlasting*, would seem in some instances more properly to have meant only a very long time. Thus, the statutes of the Mosaic law were frequently said to be eternal, and yet they were abolished. In the same law, the servant whose ear was bored, with his own consent, is said to be obliged to serve his master eternally and for ever, (Exod. xxi. 6.) ; and yet it was appointed by the same law, that all servants were to be freed every fiftieth year. Circumcision was said to be an eternal institution, (Gen. xvii. 7.) ; and yet it is now abolished by divine authority. The land of Canaan was given to Abraham and his posterity for an *eternal* possession, (Gen. xiii. 15. ; xvii. 8. ; xlvii. 4.) ; and yet his posterity have long been dispossessed of it.

† Jude 6. In this text also, *everlasting* seems only to mean *until the judgment*.

rits of men be kept in such prison as well as angelic spirits ? The fallen angels are nowhere said to be now in their place of lasting punishment—in hell, as we generally understand this word, but are *reserved* for it, as are the spirits of men deceased. They are in a place of *darkness*, that is, one of mystery to us—invisible to mortal ken, and the *chains* with which they are metaphorically said to be bound, can only to our understandings mean that they are in a place of confinement, since such chains as we knew any thing about, could never be imagined fitted to fetter *spirits*, and if they are not such material things, then our ideas can only take the expression as a metaphor, in the same way as we cannot literally understand that what is called *the bottomless pit* has a door on it, with a lock and a key, and a seal, to keep all secure.

All the information we can gather from Scripture, as to the state of our Lord's soul between his death and rising again, is of the utmost consequence in the inquiry we are pursuing. I trust, therefore, that I shall not be held to be carrying this discussion too far, if I have still farther recourse to the interpretations of those learned men who are anxious to found their faith upon Revelation alone, and on its most natural and *consistent* meanings,—meanings, too, which often cannot be discovered from the English translation of our common version.

In Mr. Polwhele's *Essay on the State of the Soul after Death*, he notices that in the text from St. Peter,—“The original words are very strong and decisive.” Literally signifying—“*dead in his body*”—“*lighted up with new life in his soul.*” \* Escaped from the burden of his mortal body, his soul was animated with a more ardent vivacity—was rendered capable of more powerful energies, and with a life thus kindled into a brighter flame, he went and preached to the spirits whose bodies had perished in the deluge.

“Although some have understood this text in a general or figurative sense, and will not now admit of a more literal construction, the ancient fathers (with the exception of St.

Augustin) understood the passage, in its most obvious sense. That—‘the soul of Christ preached salvation to the souls in Hades;’ this was the persuasion of Clemens: and that, ‘as Christ went into Hades, so shall our souls go thither,’ thought Irenæus and Tertullian.\*

“In this singular text,” Mr. P. goes on, “if read according to its natural import, are exhibited our Saviour’s death; his descent into *Hades*; his employment there; his resurrection; his ascension; and his station in heaven. But if we resort to the metaphorical interpretation, we strike off a link from the chain, and distort the text to an unnatural meaning.

“The spirits in prison were human souls or spirits, separated from their bodies. And the prison was ‘a place of safe keeping,’ for such the original word imports—a place of seclusion from the external world.”

“It is hardly necessary to mention,” says Bishop Horsley, “that ‘spirits’ here can signify no other spirits than the souls of men: for we read not of any preaching of Christ to any other race of beings than mankind. The Apostle’s assertion, therefore, is this, that Christ went and preached to souls of men in prison. The invisible mansion of departed spirits, though certainly not a place of penal confinement to the good, is nevertheless in some respects a prison—a place of unfinished happiness, consisting in rest, security, and hope, more than enjoyment.” “As a place of confinement, therefore, though not of punishment, it may well be called a prison. The original word, however, in this text of the Apostle, imports not of necessity so much as this, but merely a place of safe keeping; for so this passage might be rendered with great exactness. And the invisible mansion of departed souls is to the righteous a place of safe keeping, where they are preserved under the shadow of God’s right hand, as their condition is sometimes described in Scripture, till the season shall arrive for their advancement to their

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\* See particularly the latter. Lib. iv. c. 45. Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. vi. and St. Cyril in Joan. Lib. xii.

future glory ; as the souls of the wicked, on the other hand, are reserved in the other division of the same place unto the judgment of the great day. Now, if Christ went and preached to souls of men thus in prison, or in safe keeping, surely he went to the prison of those souls, or to the place of their custody"—the hell or *hades* of the Creed.\*

"The apostle affirms that it was *in his spirit*, that is, *in his disembodied soul*, that Christ went and preached to those souls in safe custody. 'Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.' *The Spirit*, in these English words, seems to be put, not for the soul of Christ, but for the divine Spirit ; and the sense of them seems to be, that Christ, after he was put to death, was raised to life again by the Holy Spirit. But this, though it be the sense of the English translation, and a true proposition, is certainly not the sense of the Apostle's words. It is of great importance to remark, though it may seem a grammatical nicety, that the prepositions in either branch of this clause have been supplied by the translators, and are not in the original. The words 'flesh' and 'spirit,' in the original, stand without any preposition." After a farther critical examination into the true meaning, therefore, Bishop H. goes on to say, "that if the word flesh denotes, as it most evidently does, the part in which death took effect upon him, '*spirit*' must denote life which was preserved in him, that is, his soul ; and the word 'quickened' is often applied to signify, not the resurrection of life extinguished, but the preservation and continuance of life subsisting. The exact rendering, therefore, of the Apostle's words would be—'Being put to death in

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\* Man was left to die, instead of being permitted to continue where he had the power to have eaten of the tree of life. Death was the penalty—the punishment, which fell on the whole race of man, and is the fate of the good as well as the bad. Now, as the bodies of the first, lie in the ground corrupted and dissolved equally with the other, so their souls, as to the share they bear of death, all remain in a separate state, which is therefore no more a punishment to them than death itself may be called, and of which it is a part. The body, in short, may be said to be confined one way, and the soul another, while the state which we denominate *death* lasts.



the flesh, but quick in the spirit,' that is, surviving in his soul the stroke of death which his body had sustained ; ' by which,' or rather, ' in which,' that is, in which surviving soul, ' he went and preached to the souls of men in prison or in safe keeping.' "

" These had been *sometime* disobedient. The expression ' sometime were,' or one while had been disobedient, implies that they were recovered, however, from that disobedience. Certainly he preached neither repentance nor faith ; for the preaching of either comes too late to the departed soul. Nor was the end of his preaching any liberation of them from we know not what purgatorial pains of which the Scriptures give not the slightest intimation. But if he went *to proclaim* to them (and to proclaim or publish is the true sense of the word '*to preach*') the glad tidings, that he had actually offered the sacrifice of their redemption, and was about to appear before the Father as their intercessor, in the merit of his own blood. This was a preaching fit to be addressed to departed souls, and would give new animation and assurance to their hope of the consummation in due season of their bliss."

" For what reason," inquires Bishop Horsley, " should the proclamation of the finishing of the great work of redemption be addressed exclusively to the souls of these antediluvian penitents ? Were not the souls of the penitents of later ages equally interested in the glad tidings ? To this I can only answer, that I think I have observed, in some parts of Scripture, an anxiety, if the expression may be allowed, of the sacred writers to convey distinct intimations that the antediluvian race is not uninterested in the redemption and the final retribution." " It may be conceived, that the souls of those who died in that dreadful visitation might from that circumstance have peculiar apprehensions of themselves as the marked victims of divine vengeance, and might particularly need the consolation of the preaching of our Lord."

It may perhaps suggest some explanation why Christ should address those in particular who are here referred to,

if we consider that they were in a very peculiar situation as to sin and punishment. St. Paul tells us that ~~from~~ the transgression of Adam all men die.\* “Until the Law, sin was in the world ; but sin is not imputed where there was no law ; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.” The design of all this is to prove, that men die, or are mortal, not for their own sins, but for the sin of Adam ; because, though all men, as well as Adam, have sinned, yet till the giving of the law of Moses there was no law which threatened death against sin, but only that law given to Adam in paradise, which no man ever did, or ever could transgress, but he : *now “sin is not imputed where there is no law :”* that is, it is not imputed to any man to death, before there is any law which threatens death against it. That no man can be reckoned to die for those things which no law punishes with death. Upon what account, then, says the Apostle, could those men die who lived between Adam and Moses before the law was given which threatened death ? And yet die they all did, even those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who had neither eaten the forbidden fruit, nor sinned against any other express law threatening death. This could be for no other sin but Adam’s ; he sinned and brought death into the world, and thus death passed upon all men for his sin, notwithstanding they themselves were sinners.†

We are not justified in abandoning the plain sense of the words, although we may fancy some obscurity in them, especially when they are confirmed by other scriptures. In the place named, the soul of our Lord must have had some conference with the souls there, and made some communication to them, while we may believe that a particular proclamation to one class might be the means of a general information to all.

It was most probably out of the prison alluded to by St. Peter in the text which we have been considering, that Isaiah

\* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

† See Sherlock on Death.

means in his prophecy Christ shall bring the prisoners—and that he should proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound,\* and the “preaching” of Christ was the “proclamation” of the prophet. That, having expired on the cross, he had just been offered up a sacrifice for their sins, and was returning to the earth to reanimate his body. Such were the glad tidings he had to proclaim—the tidings of redemption to all not utterly unworthy of his mediation.

Whatever heavenly mansion our Lord ascended to upon leaving this earth, it does not follow that Christ now *always* resides in the highest heavens in his individual character, and never leaves the region so denominated, to gladden the Paradise of the Middle State with his presence, or on visits to the starry worlds (of which our earth forms one) to hold personal intercourse with their inhabitants as he did with us, or for his own pleasure. We have unexceptionable evidence that he returned even to this world long after he had ascended from it, and the cloud had received him from the sight of his disciples and followers; for St. Paul relates that he was sensible of a divine presence at his marvellous conversion as he at mid-day journeyed to Damascus, although he saw nothing but a light or luminous appearance “above the brightness of the sun,” out of which he heard a voice calling to him, saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” To which this highly distinguished man answered, “Who art thou, Lord?” when the voice replied, “*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.*” We cannot therefore doubt that it was Christ himself who spoke, and that he was present although his form was invisible, as he sometimes used to render himself unseen while here on his mission of redemption; but on this occasion, a part of the glory which surrounds him was shown to the astonished Roman. The voice desired the new convert to stand up on his feet, and told him that he had thus appeared unto him to make him

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\* Isaiah lx1.

a minister and a witness of the things which he had seen, and of others which were to be revealed to him.

One remarkable circumstance may be noticed here, namely, that although the Apostle distinctly heard every word that was thus said to him, his attendants, who appear to have been close beside him, *did not*, but *they* saw the glory.\*

I shall conclude this chapter with the ably supported opinions of some eminent divines, still farther showing that the soul cannot be held (consistently with scriptural doctrine) to enter into the heaven of their everlasting reward immediately at death, nor until all the accepted shall do so after the resurrection and judgment on the last day.

Bishop Smalridge, in a sermon preached before the Lord Mayor of London, and published in 1713, thus speaks of what we have been discussing :—"It is an opinion in this generally received, that the souls of departed saints are immediately after their departure from the body conveyed into the highest heaven by the holy angels, and forthwith admitted into the glorious presence of God, and there possessed of the same happiness and glory which they shall enjoy to all eternity. But it is more consonant to the word of God, and to the primitive doctrine of the Catholic church, to believe that the happiness of souls, while sequestered from their bodies, is in the degree of it less perfect than it shall be after the resurrection; that it consists rather in a total release from sin and misery, in a joyful retrospect upon their past labours and holiness of their lives, and a certain prospect of future bliss, than in a full participation of their ultimate reward. That, as the pious and faithful are in Scripture, even whilst they are in this world, said to rejoice with joy unspeakable, as often as they fix their eyes upon that ample recompence which they hope to receive when Christ shall come in glory, so the delight which the assurance of this reward will afford them, when it is by death

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\* Acts xxvi. 12—18.

brought nearer, when they will see it more clearly, when there are no fears of falling short of it, no doubts of obtaining it, when they have an earnest and pledge of it in that tranquillity of which they are already possessed, shall be still more ravishing and conceivable ; but even this state, joyful and happy as it is in comparison with the utmost felicity of which we are capable in this life, is as much inferior to that consummate bliss which glorified saints shall enjoy after the resurrection, as the expectation of a distant and unseen good is to the present enjoyment of it ; as hope, in so far, is to actual possession."

Bishop Taylor assures us that "The middle state is not it which Scripture hath propounded to our faith, or to our hope ; the reward is then when Christ shall appear ; but, in the mean time, the soul can converse with God, and with angels, just as the holy prophets did in their dreams, in which they received great degrees of favour and revelation. But this is not to be reckoned any more than an entrance or a waiting for the state of our felicity. And since the glory of heaven is the great fruit of election, we may consider that the body is not predestinate, nor the soul, alone, but the whole man ; and until the parts embrace again in an essential complexion, it cannot be expected either of them should receive the portion of the predestinate." The same author advances a similar doctrine in various parts of his writings. In a sermon at the end of his *Worthy Communicant* he observes : "In the state of separation, the spirits of good men shall be blessed and happy souls. They have an antepast or taste of their reward, but their great reward itself, their crown of righteousness, shall not be yet. The confirmation of the saints' felicity shall be at the resurrection of the good."

Among the Sermons of Bishop Bull, is one on the *Middle State of happiness or misery*, which he explains and defends in the following terms :—"The souls of all the faithful, immediately after death, enter into a place and state of bliss, far exceeding all the felicities of this world, though short of that most consummated perfect beatitude of the

kingdom of heaven, with which they are to be crowned and rewarded in the resurrection. And so, on the contrary, the souls of all the wicked are presently, after death in a state of very great misery, and yet dreading a far greater misery at the day of judgment.”\*

“All good men,” adds this prelate in another place, “without exception, are in the whole interval between their death and resurrection, as to their souls, in a very happy condition ; but *after* the resurrection, they be yet more happy, receiving then ~~their~~ full reward, their perfect consummation of bliss, both in ~~soul~~ and body, the most perfect bliss they are capable of, according to the divers degrees of virtue through the grace of God on their endeavours attained by them in this life. On the other side, all the wicked, as soon as they die, are very miserable as to their souls ; and shall be yet far more miserable both in soul and body after the day of judgment, proportionally to the measure of sin committed by them here on earth. This is the plain doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Church of Christ in its first and best ages, and this we may trust to.”†

Bishop Sherlock justly says that—“It is the resurrection of our bodies which is our victory and triumph over death ; for death was the punishment of Adam’s sin, and those who are in a separate state still suffer the curse of the Law, ‘dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.’—But no man can be said to be delivered from death, till his body rise again, for part of him is under the power of death still, while his body rots in the grave. Nay, he is properly in a state of death, while he is in a state of separation of soul and body, which is the true notion of death : and therefore St. Paul calls the resurrection of the body, the destroying of death.‡ ‘He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet ; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.’ That is, by the resurrection of the dead, as appears from the

\* Bishop Bull’s Works, Vol. I. pp. 102, 103.

† Pp. 126, 127.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.

whole scope of the place, and is particularly expressed in the 54th and 55th verses following, ‘so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then* shall be brought to pass that saying which is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?’—I doubt not, but good men are in a very happy state before the resurrection, and yet their happiness is not complete: for the very state of separation is an imperfect state, because a separate soul is not a perfect man: A man by the original constitution of his nature consists of soul and body, and therefore his perfect happiness requires the united glory and happiness of both parts, of the whole man, which is not considered by those who cannot apprehend any necessity why the body should rise again; since, as they conceive, the soul might be as completely and perfectly happy without it.”—“A soul in a state of separation, how happy soever otherwise it may be, has still this mark of God’s displeasure on it, that it has lost its body, and therefore the reunion of our souls and bodies has at least this advantage in it, that it is a perfect restoring of us to the divine favour.”—“I think we have no reason to doubt but this reunion of soul and body will be a new addition of happiness and glory.”\*

Dr. Burnet has argued at considerable length against the idea of separate souls going direct to heaven or hell, and his reasonings have great force and truth in accordance with Scripture. “They who promise themselves,” he says, “or others this beatific vision immediately after their deaths, ought in reason to show us some promise in Scripture that may sustain so great a hope. For in these and the like matters, which flow not immediately from the nature of things but from the will and appointment of God, a hope that is founded on no divine promise, is a rash hope. Tell me then the sacred, the inspired authors, who are the

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\* Practical Discourse on Death, Vol. I. pp. 126, 127.

sureties and the guarantees of so great a hope, and of so sudden and so vast a felicity? In those passages of the sacred writings, which assure us that we shall one day see God, we are by no means taught that this shall be immediately after any one's death. We are rather told, on the contrary, that this shall not be till Christ shall appear, nor shall it be made manifest to the sons of God, unless in the resurrection.

“Besides, according to the same sacred oracles, and the Apostolical writings, the saints are not to obtain their glory and their solemn reward before the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. St. Peter promises a crown of glory to the faithful shepherds of Christ when the prince of shepherds shall appear: nor can I believe that the people will receive their reward before their pastor. St. Paul, who in the Christian warfare is second to none, tells us that he is not to receive his crown till the day of the coming of the Lord, the rightful Judge; and that he is persuaded that he shall then at last receive from God the soul which he has committed to him, together with eternal life. I am persuaded, says he, that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day.”—“When he prays to God to have mercy on any one, when he promises joys, or threatens revenge or torments, the Apostle is wont to that day to refer them all. And yet if human souls, immediately after their departure; were either to be plunged in unspeakable torments, or exalted to the height of glory, he ought to have referred both the happiness and the misery only to the hour of death.”—“Let us now only hearken to the voice from heaven. ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.’ But why blessed? Is it because they are immediately to enjoy the beatific vision? I find nothing at all like this in the prophet. What then do we find in him? ‘*For they rest from their labours, and their works follow them,*’ which at length will have their reward. This is the established order of things; this and no other is the beatitude that we are to expect. We assert, then, according to the degrees of the Christian religion, that the felicity of departed souls will arise either



from the hope of future glory, or from rest and internal joy, till that happy day shall shine forth, in which Christ will raise the dead, make them like to the angels in glory, and conformable to himself.”—“It is agreeable neither to Scripture, nor to the light of nature, either to exact extreme punishments, or to expect supreme rewards before the matter is brought to judgment, and the merits of the cause is known. But the Scripture makes mention of no judgment before the end of the world.”—“But all this, you will say, is to be understood of a general judgment : But there is, besides, a private and particular judgment, which is appointed to be immediately after every man’s death, and which is passed upon every soul as soon as it leaves the body. Pray if you please, let me know the places of Scripture that testify this : let me see the validity of them, and whether or not they clearly prove a private and particular judgment before the last solemn one ? ” \*

Dr. Whitby, in many parts of his *Commentary*, and particularly on 2 Tim. iv. 8. advances many arguments from Scripture to prove that the final and complete happiness of the righteous does not take place until after the judgment at the great day. He considers the immediate ascent of the soul to heaven after death as an heresy contradicted by Scripture and by the faith of the primitive ages. And he quotes numerous passages from the Fathers to prove that the souls of good men remain till the day of judgment in a certain place out of heaven, expecting the day of judgment and retribution.

Dr. Hammond, in his *Annotations* on 2 Tim. i. 16. observes,—“It is certain that some measure of bliss which shall at the day of judgment be vouchsafed the saints when their bodies and souls shall be reunited, is not till then enjoyed by them.”

In an admirable and deeply learned funeral address, which

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\* Burnet, *De Statu Mortuorum*. (Translated in the text.)

shows a most extensive knowledge of the true doctrine of the Scriptures on this subject, the late Bishop Hobart, while advert<sup>g</sup>ing to the state of the departed, puts the question—*When does the spirit enter into the state of complete felicity?* And in answer, says—“There cannot be a moment’s doubt, that departed saints do not enter on the *full* fruition of bliss immediately on their release from the body. In what does this future fulness of bliss consist? *In the union of purified spirit with the glorified body.* But until the voice of the Son of God calls to the corruptible to put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality, that body is confined to the tomb, embraced by corruption, mingled with the dust. Admission to heaven, the place of the vast universe of God, where the vision of his glory, more immediately displayed, shall constitute the eternal felicity of the redeemed, does not take place, according to the sacred writings, until the judgment of the great day; when the body, raised incorruptible and glorious, shall be united to the soul purified and happy. While the soul is separate from the body, and absent from that heaven which is to be her eternal abode, she cannot have attained the perfection of bliss.

“Will the privileges of believers be greater than those of their divine Head? His glory in heaven consists in the exaltation of his human nature—of his glorified body in union with his perfect spirit. But in the interval between his death and his resurrection, his body was embalmed\* by his disciples, washed with their tears, and guarded in the sepulchre *by his enemies.* His spirit therefore was not in heaven until he ascended there after his resurrection. ‘Touch me not,’ said he to Mary Magdalene, when he had risen from the dead, ‘for I have not yet ascended to your Father and my Father, to your God and my God.’† Our blessed Lord

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\* The embalming here spoken of, consisted only, according to St. John, of laying the body into linen clothes with spices about it. As the Sabbath was close at hand, no more could be done to it at that time, but a more complete embalming was intended when the fast was past; and the women were carrying “sweet spices” to the sepulchre for that purpose, when they were told of his resurrection.

† John xx. 17.

was **not** in heaven, in his human nature, until after his resurrection. And will a privilege be conferred on the members which was not enjoyed by the Head? 'This **day** shalt thou be with me in paradise,' was his language to the penitent thief associated with him at his crucifixion—in paradise, not in heaven; for the happiness of heaven supposes the happiness of the whole man, of his soul united to his body. But on that day on which the Saviour assured the penitent subject of his mercy that he should be with him in **paradise**, the body of the one was consigned to corruption, and the body of the other to the tomb."

It were useless to carry evidence, argument, or authority farther, to show that souls do not enter on their eternal state immediately on death,—that they are not received into heaven or hell, as these places are now generally understood,—for with those who have attentively read the preceding pages of this chapter, without being convinced of the doctrine it is intended to establish, the endeavour, I fear, would be in vain to render it in their opinion more decisive of the question. Had any single author, or theological critic, urged even all the arguments, and referred to all the proofs from Holy Writ which has been here done, his interpretations could not have carried that weight and authority, so as to produce such a firm conviction, as if sanctioned by the opinions of many of the most learned and devout Christian writers, whose abilities and researches so well entitle them to deference. There are few who cannot decide whether or not those reasonings here adduced, which are founded on scriptural passages, are fair and natural. I have in general cited the very words of those writers referred to, although some may think a *summary* of such opinions would have answered the same purpose, and been preferable from its greater brevity; but, as my anxious object was to *convince* others of the truth upon so important a part of this inquiry, it appeared to me that this could best be done by incorporating also the original discussions, generally abridged, it is true, but still retaining the convincing vigour and expression of their authors.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Middle State of the Soul demonstrated.

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“Since it is appointed unto all men once to die, the state of those who have experienced this change must be a subject of universal interest.”

PEERS.

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1. EVERY living man has a *visible* body, and a yet more noble part—an invisible soul.

2. His soul is acknowledged to be immortal, and therefore not subject to an insensible sleep or state of unconsciousness after the death of the body.\*

3. That his *body* is subject to death, and dissolvable into dust, hourly experience must convince us.

4. If the soul dieth not, and consciousness be (as it undoubtedly must be) the life of the soul when divested of its mortal body, then, in whatever place the soul may be after death, it must continue conscious of its existence, for we have no idea of a living soul out of the body, and yet perfectly unconscious that it is alive.

5. Were the soul to become insensible, or torpid, after its separation from the body—then it must be said to die, and

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\* Even if the soul was ever really insensible during sleep or in a trance, this would not be a good reason for believing that after it is freed from the body, and not weighed down by matter, it must become unconscious; but it has been already proved that *the memory* on awakening is no sure test of the mind having been inactive during slumber.

be no more immortal than the body, inasmuch as—according to the doctrines of divine revelation, the body is to revive, although of an altered nature, and then to live for ever.

6. But as the body which now is, is subject to dissolution, and on its dissolution, is no longer a body, the soul cannot continue to inhabit it.

7. If the soul cannot continue in the body after dissolution, it must go somewhere else.

8. The Scriptures assure us that a body shall be raised at the last day,—shall spring from the remains of our present one as a plant does from a seed—and that then the soul shall be reunited to a material body.

9. Hence, until the day of the resurrection, the soul must live in a disembodied, and therefore separate state.

10. As this state of separation must be to the soul an imperfect one, we must infer that in such a state it cannot experience that degree of felicity or misery which in its reunion with the body, is prepared for it, else its glorified body would be of no benefit to it.

11. If then the separate state of the soul is to be changed upon its reunion with the body to a state of felicity or misery beyond what it feels while in the region of departed spirits, (termed *Sheol* in the Old Testament, and *Hades* in the New,) it cannot be said with truth, that on the death of the body, the soul enters into an *unchangeable* state.

12. If the state on which we\* enter at death is thus to be changed, it is not an *eternal* one, as many call it—but must cease at the last day, as revelation informs us it shall do.

13. “The just,” (in the Scriptural sense of the term) are promised perfect happiness in heaven—and to be themselves made perfect on their reception into heaven, not merely as spirits, but as complete beings—wherefore *this*, and this only, can be their *eternal* state.

14. If the departed souls of men cannot yet be perfectly happy, nor perfect in themselves as Beings, nor in an eter-

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\* Putting the principal part, or the sole part which thinks and directs, for the whole, as is very often done in Scripture, and in common language.

nal state, then there are none of them as yet in heaven, although they may be in that blissful but *temporary* state spoken of by our Lord under the names of *Paradise* and *Abraham's bosom*, waiting there for the reunion with bodies, according to the well known belief of the Jewish nation and scriptural doctrine.

15. If the righteous are not in the place of their eternal reward denominated in Holy Writ *the highest heavens*, or as we now generally call it, *heaven*, the wicked are not in the place of eternal punishment, which is termed *Gehinnom* or *Tophet* in the Old Testament, and *Gehenna* in the New, *never Hades*, although our translators render all these indiscriminately by the English word *hell*, which is improperly applied to the latter, at least in the modern and general sense of it; or a distinction ought to be made between the two meanings of *hell*, as is given in Dr. Johnson's dictionary.

16. The Bible nowhere affirms, that the good are or shall be in the highest heaven, or that the wicked are or shall be in hell (in the modern acceptation of it) until Christ pronounces their doom at the last day; both places for their reception at that time, being spoken of as having been *prepared* for each class; not as having been the habitation of either, or as having been previously seen by them.

17. If the final reward or punishment is not yet given to the souls of any deceased men who have died since death first entered into the world, then there has been no trial or sentence on them.

18. There are none such revealed as to take place until the last day, and only *one judgment* is mentioned, when all who ever lived shall be present, to be judged, and the great or eternal separation is to be made; or, in scriptural phraseology, the reapers of the Lord are then to gather in His harvest.

19. If no judgment has as yet taken place, then our eternal doom has not been pronounced, and if not pronounced, then in no instance has it already been carried into execution, as many believe—none having yet been received into *heaven*, or thrust into *outer darkness*.

20. If the soul after death retains its consciousness, and does not enter into an eternal state until after the last day, it enters upon a *Middle* or *Intermediate State* whenever the body is deprived of life, and it then must go to the region of separate spirits, to await there the re-formation of bodies and judgment, but which place is merely one of safe keeping, out of mortal sight, (*Sheol* or *Hades* signifying no more) a place of rest for the souls of the righteous from the labours of their earthly state of trial, and has no relation to *Purgatory*, which is said to be a place of *purification* for all who enter it; but the conscious spirits of the wicked, or as we here say, their *consciences* shall therein torment them with the remembrance of their sins, and they shall have a fearful looking for of judgment, and be also unhappy from being deprived of all worldly pleasures, on which alone their whole minds were fixed while in this world.

## CHAPTER VII.

The belief in a Middle State shown to give no sanction to the Roman Catholic notion of *Purgatory*, and that such a place was not heard of for several hundred years after the time of the Apostles, and can have no existence consistently with divine Revelation.

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“ Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered.”—ST. MARK vii. 13.

“ Teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.”—ST. MATT. xv. 9.

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BEFORE we proceed to show that *Purgatory* can have no reality, it is proper that we understand correctly what it is described to be in its nature by those who uphold its existence, so that every justice may be done to the doctrine, and we shall therefore refer to their own accounts of it, for much misapprehension exists among Protestants regarding several of its peculiarities. The following information on this head is from *The General Catechism*\* of the Roman Church.

“ *Quest.* What is *purgatory* ?

“ *Ans.* A place or state of punishment in the other life, where some souls suffer for a time, before they can go to heaven, where nothing defiled can enter. Matt. xii. 32.—Apoc. xxi. 27.

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\* First written by Archbishop Butler, and bearing to be recommended by four Roman Catholic Bishops of Ireland ; afterwards corrected and enlarged by Bishop Doyle.



“*Quest.* Do any others go to purgatory besides those who die in venial sin ?

“*Ans.* Yes ; all who die indebted to God’s justice on account of mortal sin.

“*Quest.* Can the souls in purgatory be relieved by our prayers and other good works ?

“*Ans.* Yes ; being children of God, and still members of the Church, they share in the communion of saints, and the Scripture says, “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.” 2 *Mac.* xii. 46.”

The Right Rev. Dr. Chaloner gives a further exposition of it in *The grounds of the Catholic doctrine as contained in the Profession of Faith, published by Pope Pius IV.*

“Of purgatory.—What is the doctrine of the Church as to this point ?

“We constantly hold that there is a purgatory ; and that the souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful : that is, by the prayers and alms offered for them, and principally by the holy sacrifice of the mass.

“What do you mean by purgatory ?

“A middle state of souls which depart this life in God’s grace, yet not without some lesser stains or guilt of punishment which retards them from entering heaven ; but as to the particular place where these souls suffer, the church has decided nothing.

“What sort of Christians then go to purgatory ?

“1st, Such as die guilty of lesser sins, which we commonly call *venial* ; as many Christians do, who either by sudden death or otherwise, are taken out of this life before they have repented for these ordinary failings.

“2d, Such as having been formerly guilty of greater sins, have not made full satisfaction for them to the divine justice.

“Why do you say, that those who die guilty of lesser sins go to purgatory ?

“Because such as depart this life before they have repented of these venial frailties and imperfections, cannot be supposed

to be condemned to the eternal torments of hell, since the sins of which they are guilty are but small, which even God's best servants are more or less liable to. Nor can they go straight to heaven in this state, because the Scripture assures us—'There shall in no wise enter thither any thing that defileth.\*' Now, every sin, be it ever so small, certainly defileth the soul. Hence, our Saviour assures us, that we are to render an account—'even for every idle word.' †

The Roman church holds, that the souls of saints and martyrs go directly to the highest heaven immediately after death, while those of entire reprobates and heretics are taken to the hell of everlasting torments ; or, in the language of one of her prelates—"Some few have before their deaths so fully cleared up their accounts with the Divine Majesty, and washed away all their stains in the blood of the Lamb, as to go straight to heaven after death ; and others who die in the guilt of deadly sins, go straight to hell ;" there being in their opinion no *middle* state but purgatory alone. Those only go to purgatory who shall ultimately be saved, and are to be allowed to enter into heaven on coming out of that place of purification. ‡

The doctrine inculcated in the preceding pages of the present work is that none go to heaven, as the place where we are to be eternally happy, or to hell (*γεεννα*, *Gehenna*, of the Scriptures,) until after the resurrection and judgment, which is then to take place. In the interval from death till then, the soul in its separate state continues in either the Paradise or Tartarus of *Hades*, happy or miserable in that middle abode between life on earth and its eternal destination, but that none have yet felt pain or happiness in consequence of a sentence of that nature which shall ultimately be revealed and experienced as punishment or reward after our sentence shall have been pronounced.

\* Rev. xxi. 27.

† Matt. xii. 36.

‡ See *The Catholic Christian instructed* ; a book of standard authority among Roman Catholics, and written by one of their most distinguished Bishops, Dr. Chaloner.

When so much is argued in the present day on the subject of Purgatory, and when protestants have found it necessary to counteract the open attempts of the Romanists to gain converts to their doctrines, it is very extraordinary that the preliminary and simple question of a Middle State is seemingly thought by so many of us unnecessary to be inquired into, or else held to be the same as Purgatory is fabled to be, which would be a most dangerous admission, if openly and directly made. Any examination into it is apparently shunned even by those who stand forward as the champions of our reformed faith ; we may therefore infer, that in their opinion it nowise enters into the merits of the discussion in any other point of view, than as what Popish misrepresentations call it ; whereas, it is the surest way to meet with conclusive arguments those who on this foundation build a structure evidently never intended by the inspired writers to be raised upon it. To waive its consideration simply as a middle state, or to peril the question of the existence or non-existence of Purgatory on the proof alone of a Middle State, is to give our Christian opponents too great an advantage over us in one part of their inferences from scriptural texts, and enables them to quote with apparent triumph, opinions and arguments in their own favour even from the writings of numbers of eminent and pious protestants, both of the Churches of England and Scotland, who admit a middle or separate state of consciousness for the immortal soul before it arrives at its eternal destination. This, these wise and good men show, is the result of the most learned and diligent investigation of the meaning of the Scriptures ; while those who deny it *in every form* have most commonly made no serious or proper inquiry into the subject, and consequently involve themselves in contradictions by attempting to prove too much in opposition to the doctrine of Purgatory. They find it impossible to answer some fair arguments brought against them, without doing violence to the most obvious meanings of many parts of Sacred Writ, and in some cases, indeed, arguing directly in opposition to it, by asserting, as they find themselves obliged to do, in

support of some of the propositions they maintain, either that the soul sleeps insensibly between death and the resurrection, or else enters into the highest heavens or the hell of punishment before *the* judgment, or invent a trial and decision on each soul at death ; which last, by the way, the Roman Catholic disputant would readily agree to, and refer to the belief of his church and her traditions for its truth.

It is not sufficient to prove that there is no state of purification for souls—no flames, spiritual or material, figurative or real, to fit sinners for heaven on their leaving the earth ; we must prevent the Middle State, which Scripture confirms, from being held synonymous with the other, on which that Book is silent ; and prove that the latter cannot be true, from its nature being at utter variance with the state of which we read.

The Protestant and the Romanist, in their respective churches, while arguing any disputed tenet of their *absent* opponent's creed, generally consider no arguments but those in their own favour, or only those of the other party which they can readily overthrow—the one leaving out of view any intermediate state entirely, and the other studiously bringing it forward at first without entering on its nature. In order to arrive at the truth, we ought to consider all that can be said on both sides, and give the arguments of those who differ from us their proper weight. Are we afraid to grant a middle state, as so many of our fellow protestant brethren have done ? No.—Let us acknowledge it at once, and show that it can never be changed by tradition or any thing else into what the Church of Rome has attempted to do, for reasons which shall soon be made evident.

In 1687, the Rev. Dr. Sherlock wrote *A summary of the principal Controversies between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, being a Vindication of several Protestant Doctrines, &c.* wherein he fully, clearly, and plainly proves the Middle State as contradistinguished from purgatory.

“There are several of the Protestant Divines,” says Dr. Burnet, “who will allow of no middle state of souls, through an apprehension of purgatory. Thus, when we would avoid

one bad extreme, such is the folly of mankind, we often run into another as vicious, and more blameable. It is sufficiently known, that the Papistical purgatory is a human invention, adapted to the capacity of the people, and the advantage of priests ; nor will we, through apprehension of this phantom, desert the doctrine of the ancients concerning the imperfect and unfinished happiness or misery of human souls before the day of judgment.”\*

In Nelson’s *Life of Bishop Bull*, while alluding to the sermons left by this great divine to be published after his death, the author observes :—“ There are some points handled in this collection, which at first sight, and from a superficial view, may be thought to border too much upon *curiosity*, but if the reader brings that attention and seriousness which such subjects require from us, he will find that they are primitive truths, which have their proper use and advantage in the conduct of the Christian life.

“ As for instance, he hath not only asserted, but plainly proved from the holy Scriptures, and the concurrent testimony of the Catholic Church in the purest ages—‘ That the souls of men subsist after death, in certain places of abode provided for them till the resurrection of their bodies, and that the said intermediate state allotted to them by God, is either happy or miserable, as they have been good or bad in their past lives.’ Now, as this is matter of great terror to all wicked men, who shall immediately after death be consigned to a place and state of misery, in a dreadful expectation of greater punishments at the judgment of the great day ; so it affordeth abundance of consolation to those who die in the Lord, and are entered upon their rest ; not a stupid insensible rest, but a rest attended with a lively perception of far greater joy and delight than this world is acquainted with ; in a comfortable hope of a large increase of happiness, at the second coming of the Lord of glory. But, if there was no other use to be made of this doctrine than to guard us from the corruptions of Popery, I should

think it established to very good purpose. And certainly it appeareth very manifest, that it was a part of the primitive faith to believe, that the souls of the best of men subsisted after death in separate places of rest and refreshment, and did not enjoy the beatific vision till after the resurrection of their bodies ; I say, it is evident from this principle, that the foundation for the invocation of saints is overthrown ; for they are represented to us by our adversaries of the Roman Communion, as seeing all things in *Speculo Trinitatis* ; and we are encouraged by them from that motive to offer up our prayers, and to make our addresses to the saints ; so that if they are not admitted as yet to read in the glass of the Trinity, they have according to this principle no way of knowing those prayers which are made to them.

“ Again, if it be true that the souls of the righteous do after death subsist in certain mansions of happiness till the resurrection, then what foundation can there be for any such fire of purgatory as is pretended for the purgation of the spirits of the faithful by the Church of Rome ? Or what grounds can there be for that furnace, which she hath heated as necessary to purify almost all that go out of this life, though with the sign of faith ; even for a purgatory, the pains whereof are by many of her divines represented to us as equal to those of hell, their duration only excepted ? Or for such prayers for departed souls as tend to supplicate their deliverance from a place of grievous torment ? Those of the ancient church being only for such *as were at peace*, and who rest in Christ, but those who are exposed to the pains of purgatory cannot certainly be said to enjoy those advantages.”

The Romanists rest their doctrine of Purgatory partly on *Scripture* ; partly on *tradition* ; and, as they also add, partly on *reason*. From which of these it is *principally* derived, we cannot tell, but neither of the latter can be any authority whatever, if directly contradicted by the first. Their traditions are often so vague and differently represented, even among themselves, that we cannot be supposed to know

well what faith they place in them, especially when we find such various versions of them in books generally accredited by the Popish Church. We hear of no ancient and distinct *record* of them, and the modern ones differing so much from each other, (one party denying some doctrine or tenets to be authorised by their Church, another expressly admitting them as so,) that all attempts to ascertain correctly what such traditions really do say, is in vain; and when we ask *where* we may actually find those they depend on, we can only hear

“An echo answer, *where?*”

Their verbal opinions regarding these are still more perplexing. I shall not, however, overlook the *traditions* which they commonly refer to, or refuse to enter into their arguments from *reason* for the existence of Purgatory; but, although, like thin ice, they may glitter and seem sufficient when first glanced at, to bear weighty matter, yet they will be found to give way under us, if their strength be tried by the test of impartial inquiry.

As the Church of Rome pretends to have received by oral tradition, doctrines derived from the Apostles, the Jewish doctors had the same plea, and referred their traditions up to Moses. The Jews had the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and the Romanists have the Old and New Testaments; but neither the Jews nor the Papists allow their Scriptures to be a complete rule, both having recourse to tradition, to supply what they suppose wanting in these sacred books. The latter people ought to consider how our Saviour treated this pretence of the Jewish Church. He speaks of them as human inventions; as doctrines of their own; “Laying aside the commandment of God,” says he, “ye hold the tradition of men,”\* and again—“Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.”† And in the following verses, he manifestly considered the written law of Moses as the com-

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\* Matt. vii. 8.

† Ibid. Verse 9.

mandment of God, and the traditions of the elders as the law of men, and of their own making. To *the Scriptures* our Lord constantly appealed; he bade his hearers search them, and said that they erred from not knowing these writings; having allowed their traditions to supersede them. He plainly told them that the Law and the Prophets contained *the whole* of their religion before his time, and that they had no other rule to go by. The Scribes and Pharisees asked him—"Why do thy disciples transgress the traditions of the elders?"\* The very question this which is daily put to us by the Church of Rome. But hear our Saviour's answer—"Why do you also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition?" A reply which the Roman priesthood should consider well, for they are much concerned in it. Do we want better authority than that of Christ to reject the traditions of men, and to hold fast the doctrines of the Gospel?

In *The Douay Catechism*, it is asked—"Why may not the letter of the Scripture be a decisive judge of controversies?"

"*Ans.* Because it has never yet been able, from the first writing of it, to decide any one, as the whole world doth experience: all heretics pretending equally to it, for the defence of their novelties and heresies, and no one of them ever yet yielded to another.

"*Quest.* How then can we be assured of the truth in points controverted?"

"*Ans.* By the infallible authority, definition, and proposition of the Catholic Church."

Such language has been loudly reprehended, but the last answer assumes little more power or infallibility than what *every* Christian Church does in some degree claim, with regard, at least, to its own members. All of them affirm that their peculiar as well as general doctrines are strictly founded on the Scriptures, and the Romanists merely claim *additional* evidence to this great Record of some of theirs, and sources

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\* Matt. xv. 2.



of reference for explanation of its difficult passages, to which no other Church has access. What is the distinction between our different Churches, but their interpreting Scripture in certain different ways, and each thinking itself in the right, consequently the others wrong. If a Christian, in consequence of conscientiously searching the Bible, cannot agree with the articles of belief drawn up by his church, he must, of course, cease to be an orthodox member of it. Each church has its peculiar Creed or Confession of Faith, and each requires an acceptance of these by all who adhere to its communion.\* Although the Presbyterian Church, in her Articles of Faith, disclaims any belief *in a middle state*, we may yet give her credit for greater liberality on this point in the present day, for she allows her members to judge of the reality of such a state, as shall seem most agreeable to their own individual researches. Nay, a still greater degree of freedom is permitted on this point than mere opinion; for, as already noticed, a Presbyterian Professor of Divinity long taught this doctrine; proving it to be conformable to the word of God, and his dissertation has been published many years, without an attempt at question or refutation, as far as I can discover; so those Presbyterians who adopt his opinions, need now fear no charge of

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\* An example of this lately occurred in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, when a preacher was very properly deprived of his licence to teach, for dissenting from some of its Articles of Faith; these being held the unquestionable standard of the doctrines of this Church; the attempt at defending his dissent by reference to Scripture was regarded as highly improper; and it must be evident that this Assembly could not permit a teacher of their communion to inculcate tenets at variance with the belief to which they appeal as the distinguishing faith of Presbyterians; at least, if they considered the difference a material one, as in the case alluded to they appeared to do. It may seem rather inconsistent to say (as was done on this occasion) "It could never be for a moment supposed that ministers were not to employ their talents in searching the Scriptures, or that it was impossible they might not obtain farther light by so doing,"—nevertheless—"It was the duty of ministers"—"to explain the word of God agreeably to the standards of the Church," (meaning, of course, the Established Church of Scotland.)—Yet this is done, in some measure, by all Christian communities.

See the proceedings of the General Assembly in the case of the Rev. Mr. Scott, as detailed in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* of 28th May, 1831.

heresy from their brethren. When the question is,—whether a person, holding certain doctrines, deemed seriously inconsistent with the constitution or belief of a particular church, is an orthodox member of that church, the sole authority is here the creed of the church ; but when the truth of a scriptural doctrine is to be decided on, then the Bible is the only competent test to be appealed to, as the only sure foundation and authority. As this point is of great consequence to be established with regard to many questions in the present work, I shall quote some sensible and Christian-like observations on it, from a late publication by the Right Rev. Dr. Whately, late Principal of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford, now Archbishop of Dublin.

“ If we censure the Roman Church for declaring herself not liable to error, we must confess our own liability to it, not in mere words, but in practice ; by being ever ready to listen to argument—ever open to conviction ; by continually appealing and referring at every step ‘ to the Law and to the Testimony ; ’ by continually tracing up the stream of religious knowledge to the pure fountain head—the living waters of the Scriptures.”—“ There is one decisive argument, perfectly simple, and accessible to every understanding, and particularly accessible to a pious mind, against employing any human statement of doctrines in place of Scripture, as the standard to be habitually appealed to : *it is not the will of God* that this should be done. For if it *had* been his design, that there should be any such regular system of doctrine for habitual reference, and from which there should be, in ordinary practice, no appeal, He would surely have enjoined, or at least permitted, (and the permission would have been sufficient to insure the same result,) the framing of some such Confession of Faith or Catechism, by his inspired servants themselves ; since such a system would have fully answered the purpose in question, with the great advantage, that it must have commanded the assent of all who acknowledge the Christian Scriptures.”—“ God has left to the Church the office of *preserving* the Scriptures, and introducing them to the knowledge of her members as the sole

standard of faith—as not merely the first step and foundation of proof, like the elementary propositions of mathematics, but as the *only* source of proof; and He has left her also the office of *teaching* the Christian doctrines *from* the *Scriptures*.”—“Symbolical works, such as creeds and articles, should be employed for their proper purpose of furnishing a *test* of any person’s fitness to be acknowledged a member, or a minister, of our Church. But never, if we would in deed and in spirit avoid the errors of Romanism—never should we appeal to Creeds, Liturgies, or Catechisms, for *the proof* of any doctrine, or the refutation of any error.”—“Whenever we refer, in proof or disproof of any doctrine to the Articles or Liturgy, for instance, we should not appeal to them *alone*.”—“To refer to them, *as backed by the Church’s sanction*, adds to them no legitimate force in respect to the abstract truth of any position. Such an appeal may indeed, in practice, be decisive, (and justly so,) in as far as regards members of our Church.”—“If any charge is to be brought *personally* against an individual, as unfit to be a member or minister of the Church, the appeal is naturally, and rightly, made to her formularies composed for this very purpose; but when the question is not about *a person*, but *a doctrine*—when the abstract truth of any tenet is in question, ‘to the Law and to the Testimony!’ It savours of the spirit of Romanism to refer for the proof or disproof of doctrine solely, or chiefly, to any, the most justly venerated, human authority—to any thing but the inspired word of God. For if any one proves any thing from our Articles or Liturgy, for instance, either he could have proved it from Scripture, or he could not: if he could *not*, he is impeaching either the scriptural character of the Church’s doctrines, or his own knowledge of the scriptural basis on which they rest: if he *could* have proved it from Scripture, *that* is the course he should have taken: not only because he would thus have proved his point both to those who receive our Articles, and also to those who dissent from them; but also because it is thus, and thus only, we can preserve to Scripture its due dignity and proper office, and avoid the danger-

ous and encroaching precedent of substituting human authority for divine."\*

To return : We are not investigating any doctrines of the Roman Church, without being called on by her so to do ; for she invites us to confute them if we can, or to believe in them if we cannot. We will therefore examine all her authorities respecting Purgatory, and these will show that *Scripture* supports it not—that her own *traditions* prove it to be a novelty and heresy from the primitive faith, while *reason* refuses to maintain it.

The knowledge diffused by the Societies lately instituted to support the principles of the Reformation, and to meet the emancipated exertions of the Romanists to make proselytes, has tended greatly to enlighten men's minds on the subject of the corrupted doctrines upheld by the latter. None of these Societies, however, so far as I can learn, think it necessary to admit, or even to discuss, the existence of a Middle State as *distinct* from Purgatory, and so little attention do they appear to have given to this question, that some of their members direct their arguments against any such intermediate state at all ; when this is taken advantage of by Romanist disputants, the latter are sure to have the best of the argument as long as they keep to this point, and the only line of refutation commonly resorted to by the Protestant, is by shifting his ground to reasonings proceeding on other considerations, and to texts of Holy Writ, which show that the state cannot be one of purification, such as Popish error describes it. I shall here take some important observations from the Report of a speech by one of the members of *The Reformation Society*, regarding the foundation on which a belief in Purgatory has been reared.

—"The Romish Church receives as her rule not only Scripture, but tradition, and the comments of the church on both.—The Protestant receives nothing as an article of faith which is not found in the Bible. The Roman Catholic

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\* The Errors of Romanism.

Church has not only canonized the Apocryphal writings, but to this written word she adds what is called the *unwritten* word of God—consisting, 1st, Of divine traditions, or sayings of Christ, alleged to have been handed down orally; and, 2d, Apostolical traditions, or sayings of the Apostles, handed down in like manner. All these, so far as respects doctrine or matters of faith, are by the Romish Church put on the same footing with the written word.”\*—

“In the Creed of Pope Pius IV. which every member of the Romish Church is supposed to receive, and which every clergyman of that Church swears to, it is thus written: ‘I admit and embrace the Apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions.’—Now, if there be any Roman Catholic here, I would ask him, Did you ever see these traditions? Did you ever see any body who saw them? No! These alleged traditions have no existence. If they exist, they must have a local habitation. They certainly do not in a written form, and if they be in the minds of the dignitaries of the church, to which of them shall we apply for them? Not one is able to answer your inquiry. The comments and notes on the Roman Catholic editions of the Bible are not by the Church, but by private individuals, and her dignitaries have at times disclaimed them, holding their Church nowise responsible for them. This was done some years ago by several of their bishops before a committee of the House of Commons, for the purpose of inquiring into the state of Ireland, and appears in the printed evidence, which proves also their inability to give a direct definition of the Creed of their Church, and the writings of Drs. Troy and Milner show that the inquiry is interminable, resolving itself into—‘I believe what the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches.’† The Creed of Pius goes on to say—‘Neither will I ever take or interpret them (the Scriptures) otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers.’ Now the slightest investigation will show that there is no such unanimous consent, and the Fathers never pretended to any such thing.

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\* See Milner's End of Religious Controversy.

† Ibid.

The Roman Catholic Catechisms and books of devotion are often at variance on material points, and what is held orthodox in one place, is not so in another. As, for instance, some Doctors in the College of Douay, not infallible, not the Church, produced an exposition of Christian doctrine, which all good Catholics were called on to believe. Dr. Doyle published *a corrected* edition of it, which circulates as right in his own diocese, while other editions circulate in other dioceses, which differ materially from it. Thus it is with the only authorised edition for Limerick, which is greatly different. The Roman Catholics insist that *their* doctrines are all sanctioned by Scripture, but they are evidently afraid of such a test being applied."

When a Protestant Church asserts any particular doctrine, a precise reference is made to Scripture as the *sole* support of it, and we are thus enabled to judge for ourselves; but when the Roman Church affirms any thing, although she may also refer to the Bible, yet she depends also on *other* authorities of which we cannot so easily obtain a knowledge. In *A Defence of Catholic principles*, it is said to be "absurd to assert, that Jesus Christ has taught or preached nothing essential, but what is written in a few pages of the Gospel. We do not find in the Gospel the instructions which Jesus Christ gave his Apostles, during the forty days that he appeared to them after his resurrection; and yet it is beyond all doubt that Jesus Christ during these forty days, the last he spent with his Apostles, instructed them particularly in all the mysteries of his kingdom, or of his Church, Acts i. 3. These last instructions which Jesus Christ gave his Apostles, before parting, and when they were about entering on the arduous duties of the ministry, are not lost, although not recorded in the Gospel; they form a part of that precious deposit entrusted to the Church, and have by an uninterrupted succession of pastors been transmitted undefiled to our present days."—As no Protestant Church pretends to such a deposit in addition to the Bible, here would be a manifest superiority which the Roman would have over us, *if the assertion were true*, but they keep this precious relict

so close that we know little or nothing of it ;—where it is hid, and what are the secrets or information it contains, being known only to themselves, as they never even give a quotation beyond assertions, in order to support doctrines which they do not seem to consider fully proved by Scripture. Supported, however, by this mysterious authority, they decide with unerring certainty. “Whenever the Church has pronounced,” says the Rev. Demetrius Gallitzin in his work just quoted, “the controversy is settled, doubts vanish, and we are as certain as if Jesus Christ himself had spoken ;”!! —which assertion is supported by referring to Christ’s promise to continue with his Church to the end of the world, and by insisting that—“common sense tells us, that the Gospel, the written word, could not have been intended as the supreme judge to fix our belief in matters of faith, 1st, because *it may be misunderstood*,”—which—“the many contradictory doctrines drawn from Scripture prove ;”—therefore—“Christ must have provided some visible and living authority, some supreme and unerring tribunal to explain Scripture, and this is, and can be no other than the Church.”—“It is perhaps necessary to observe,” (*very*) “that we do not believe this unerring authority to reside in any individual pastor. No ; the Pope himself, the successor of St. Peter, and the supreme pastor of the Catholic Church, is not by any article of Catholic communion believed to be infallible. The unerring authority is by all Catholics believed to reside in the body of the pastors united with their Head. If it does not reside there, it resides no where on earth.” The meaning of all this appears to be, that neither the Pope nor his clergy in their individual capacities can decide infallibly on any point of doctrine, but no sooner do they all meet together, than they are as a body immediately gifted with a penetration which they did not before possess. “If we are asked how a body of sinful and fallible men can give infallible decisions, we answer,—by the power of God.” That must mean—*by direct inspiration*, which must therefore be *another* source for their doctrine of Purgatory among the rest, besides Scripture, tradition, and reason. If, when the council is

met, (with the Pope in the chair) inspiration immediately prompts their decisions, what can be the reason they are *so seldom unanimous*? At the celebrated Councils of Trent and Florence, (whose decrees are held infallible) how came there to be such a difference of opinion?—How in particular at that of Florence was there even an uproar of dissension among these *inspired* divines, as its records amply testify? Alas for inspiration! we can now lay little claim to it in any assembly of men, and too often the *majority* of votes bear but small proof of the spirit of peace and of truth having prompted them, if worldly interests should chance to interfere. But let us apply for further explanation to M. Gallitzin: “The body of pastors, then,” he says, “being guided by the Holy Ghost, every individual pastor draws his knowledge from that body,”—and—“he is only fit to be a pastor, because he is led by an infallible guide.” In the next page we find it asserted, however, that each pastor scattered over the globe is infallible from another source than the decrees of the Church, or his knowledge of her secrets; for they are all enabled to preach—“one and the same doctrine, because Christ was with them,” Matt. xxviii. 18. 20. “The ministers of Christ in 1820, scattered over the globe, preach likewise one and the same doctrine, because Christ is still with them.” So they are, after all, infallible when separate; but we must plainly except M. Gallitzin, else he would have been consistent.

These are then the grounds on which the Church of Rome assumes a more just and true knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity than what Protestants possess; and certainly the latter pretend to no revelation to enlighten them beyond the words of inspiration open to all, and they pray to God to give them understanding and grace to discover the great truths of his Holy Record; searching it without the presuming confidence of fancied infallibility, and humbly trusting that they shall be judged according to the knowledge which God has given them, if they have made a good use of it.

We cannot be surprised that a doctrine enforced as that of Purgatory has been, so comfortable to the rich, who could



purchase favour there ; so undeniable by either the wealthy or the poor, (who were equally withheld from a true knowledge of the Scriptures,) should rapidly spread in the dark ages when Romish intolerance prevailed. For many centuries there were no opportunities to contradict what the clergy themselves only could know, from reserving for their own sole use and perusal the writings which they pretended sanctioned their doctrines, and that it was greatly for their worldly interest to keep up the delusion of Purgatory, none can deny. From their "*Acts of Faith*," as they were called, or rather acts of barbarous superstition, when they burned to death their fellow-creatures whom their assertions had failed to convince, (or as salutary examples against *doubting*,) it was no wonder that reason generally shrunk from questioning what was so cruelly upheld.

The doctrine of a separate place for our souls, called in the original *Hades*—the general region of the dead, or of all departed spirits, in which they are to remain until the resurrection of Man again as a complete being,—some souls to live there in a state of happiness, and others in a state of misery—is far from being similar to the Popish idea and belief in a state of *purification* and punishment, to cleanse souls from venial sins, or any other kind of them, preparatory to such souls entering into heaven. Hades is very different from the description of Purgatory ; a place, we are told, entirely under the guidance and power of the Roman Church ; whose purchased prayers can deliver souls before the regular time at which they would be considered sufficiently refined from earthly contaminations. Those who hold this strange doctrine, inculcate, even still further, that every one of those who can afford to pay for shortening their stay in Purgatory, shall have nothing whatever to fear from the judgment of the last day !

If this doctrine were true, some of the rich\* would cer-

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\* Including all the rich who go to purgatory : regarding those rich people who are believed to go to hell at death, the Roman Church never make intercession for any reward ; but the admitted individual instances of persons

tainly derive not only pleasures from their treasures here, but profit by them hereafter, if they were so provident as to leave a part of their money to the church, when they themselves could make no farther use of it on earth, which could not be considered great proof of goodness, trouble, or repentance. How this accords with the plain assurance in Scripture, that it will be very difficult for the rich to enter into heaven, we are not informed, and we find no intimation there, that money so bequeathed will assist our souls along the road that leadeth to happiness in an unseen world ; nor have we any pretext for believing that the intermediate state of souls is one of purification—the process too, depending not (as we might suppose) on the deepness of the stain, but according to the number of masses which their celebrators have been paid to go through on the suffering soul's behalf. The private prayers of the Church are held less efficacious in this business than when accompanied with lighting candles in day light,—with changing of garments,—tinkling of little bells, and all the ceremonial observances of the mass ; it is not according to the *fervency* of these prayers, that the purifying soul is benefited, but strictly in proportion to the *number* of masses !

In *The Grounds of Catholic Doctrine*, already quoted, it is asked—“ How is a belief of Purgatory grounded upon Scripture ? ” and the answer is—“ Because the Scripture, in many places, assures us that God will render to every one according to his works.\* Now this would not be true, if there was no such thing as Purgatory ; for how would God render to every one according to his works, if such as die in the guilt of any even the least sin, which they have not taken care to blot out by repentance, would nevertheless go straight to heaven ? ”

They found the belief also upon reason—“ Because reason clearly teaches these two things : 1st, That all and every

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going to the eternal hell of torments are few indeed, where the Church is offered payment on their account.

\* Ps. lxii. 12.—Matt. xvi. 27.—Rom. ii. 6.—Rev. xxii. 12.

sin, how small soever, deserves punishment. 2d, That some sins are so small, either through the levity of the matter, or for want of full deliberation in the action, as not to deserve eternal punishment. From whence it is plain, that besides the place of eternal punishment, which we call *Hell*, there must be also a place of temporary punishment for such as die in lesser sins, and this we call *Purgatory*.”\*

In what *manner* the Almighty chooses to render our souls and bodies fit for the society of heaven, by freeing them from all moral impurities or sins contracted by passing through this life, we cannot tell, further than that it shall be done in consequence of the offering for sin which was made by Christ, and his forgiveness. Such a knowledge we cannot acquire from Revelation, (except in figurative language,) for God has not chosen to make us acquainted with it, and if any one shall attempt to find this out by *reason*, it is evidently utterly beyond all human understanding. It should also be taken into account, that we have good grounds for believing there are very different degrees of reward or happiness in heaven, and of punishment in hell; so all have not to be brought to one standard of purity.

Bishop Tillotson says on this point:—“How our souls shall be purified from those remainders of sin and dregs of corruption which are in the best men, while they are in this world, it is not necessary that we should be able perfectly to explain. It ought to be sufficient to us, that he who hath promised it is able to do it one way or another; only I am confident, and have great reason to believe so, that this purification will not be wrought by the fire of Purgatory. For if there be any such thing, as there is not the least spark of divine Revelation for it, (and how any body should come to know it otherwise, is not easy to imagine,) it is granted to be a *material* fire; and if it is so, it is nowise fitted either for the punishment or purification of impure *souls*. Indeed if men carried their bodies into Purgatory, the fire might be called a cruel torment and vexation to them: but how fire

should scorch a spirit, is, I believe, beyond the subtilty of a schoolman to make out ; much less is it fitted to purge and take away sin. And if the truth were known, it was never seriously intended for that purpose, to do any good to the dead ; but to drain the purses of the living, by deluding them with a vain hope of getting their friends delivered out of that imaginary torment.

“ But we, who take our faith from the word of God, and not from the fictions of men, do believe that the souls of good men do immediately pass out of this world into a state of happiness,\* and that he who bestows this happiness upon them, does qualify them for it before he admits them into it. And if we consider the matter well, we shall find, that a man who hath truly repented of his sins, and, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, hath obtained the pardon and forgiveness of them, and is firmly resolved against sin,”—“ we shall find that such a man is not far from the kingdom of God :”—“ And that there hardly wants any thing to make such a man perfectly good, but only to remove out of his way those obstacles and impediments to virtue, and to free him from those circumstances of infirmity and temptation which do unavoidably encompass us in this world.”†

The purgatorial fires were considered from the time of their discovery until lately, as real and actual flames, only more intense than those we can feel here ; but now, the Church, which has recourse to them in aid of her power and her treasury, has begun to be uncertain of their exact nature, as it is found that Protestants have raised some substantial objections not easily answered, to *material* fires operating on spirits. She now holds, that although, in fact, they may be so still, yet fires of any kind will answer the purpose, and therefore that it is not absolutely necessary to believe them to be material.‡ There is, however, a schism on the subject, and though some Romish divines, in order to

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\* Meaning comparatively so called—but inferior to that of heaven.

† Tillotson's second Sermon on 1 John iii. 2.

‡ See The End of Religious Controversy.

accommodate their Purgatory as much as possible to Protestant ideas, may admit these flames to be quite different from earthly fires, yet in general they are still considered of much the same kind; as the terror of any other flames might not influence men here so strongly as is required; whatever they might be able to accomplish afterwards, when in actual contact. In one respect they must be far more powerful than those of *hell proper*, for these last cannot consume sin, which there continues the same, according to the best information. What their particular nature, however, is alleged to be, is of inferior consequence to be inquired into, when we have such evidence of there being no Purgatory for them to blaze in, and that there is no such purification now going on.

From the proofs of Purgatory being so elusive, and the nature of its fires so uncertain, (except that they can purify from sin,) we might be inclined to infer that these flames were only meant by the Roman Church as *metaphorical*, but until she agrees on what should be believed concerning them, we must give up any attempt at refutation of them, from showing that they cannot be material, and as to *spiritual* flames, they are entirely above our comprehension. As, however, we have always considered here the *popular*, as well as *learned* belief on particular points, I shall just illustrate the one at present under discussion, with two apparently very different ways of speaking and thinking of the treatment in Purgatory, by two well known and celebrated members of the Romish Church; who both must, as good Catholics, (without imagining themselves to be saints,) have expected to go there. Their own individual opinions in the matter may not be held of great authority, but they may show a belief current in their days. Shakspeare makes the ghost of the king of Denmark thus inform us what species of flames he, for one, was in the course of being made better by; and ghosts are certainly much more likely to know than any of the living, although none who could be much depended on have as yet come back "to blab the secrets of their prison house." Ghosts are said to have leave of ab-

sence only for a certain time, which terminates in general when the cock crows at the approach of day ; but as it is always day light on some part of the earth, and always night on some other, it will be seen that their time of relaxation must depend on the part of the world where their individual concerns lie, and that there can be no general time for either setting out or returning. While it was day in Denmark, the ghost of the king was in Purgatory, and when the shades of night came over that country, he got back again on his special errand. If the *night* had protected him here, he might easily have followed it round the globe till it had returned to Elsinour again, but before the sun rose on his old country, he was anxious to be back :—telling his son—

“ My hour is almost come,  
When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames,  
Must render up myself.”

And there

—————“ confined too fast in fires,  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature,  
Are burnt and purged away.”

The next example is from Mr. Pope's works, and as far as his evidence goes, the flames are by no means so tormenting as is commonly thought. He puts the following lines into the mouth of a dying penitent, who was on the eve of departure for the place where sinners rest, with flames, as it would seem, *within* them !

“ I come, ye ghosts, prepare your roseate bowers,  
Celestial palms, and ever blooming flowers ;  
Thither where sinners may have rest, I go,  
*Where flames refined, in breasts seraphic, glow.*”

The two first and the two last lines appear to relate, the one to paradise or heaven, and the other to a purgatory of rest, where the flames are cooled so as not to prevent souls reposing. Does the penitent, then, call on the saints in the mansions of the blest, to prepare their palms and flowers, because he is going to purgatory, or does the whole verse relate to the same place ? Let a Romanist explain the meaning if he can.

When we come to examine the alleged proofs of the existence of Purgatory as arising from tradition, we find they almost always refer to the early Christians having been in the practice of praying for the souls of their departed friends. This, say the Roman Catholics, shows that the souls must have been supposed in a state of suffering, out of which prayers could deliver them, and this state could be none other than Purgatory. It will therefore be necessary for us to inquire particularly into the nature of these prayers,—the ideas entertained of the dead by the ancient church, and the object in praying for them. The fact of such prayers having been in use to be offered up in the early ages of Christianity, is indisputable, but their propriety has been questioned. Many are apt to confound all prayers for the dead, with the sole reference to praying the departed souls out of Purgatory, but an impartial inquiry into the reasons which induced the primitive Christians to use these, will show that they proceeded on no such idea. The common answer of Protestants to this argument for Purgatory is, either to deny that prayers for the dead were made at the times referred to, or to insist that they are at best wholly useless. But, as to the first, ecclesiastical history proves them, and the second objection to them, (if their having been resorted to is admitted,) includes an affirmation that we now know much better than the primitive Christians, and than even many old Protestant divines of great learning, what is proper in this respect; neither of which arguments, therefore, can be expected to satisfy the Romanist that he is wrong. We must take other grounds, and these will be found in the nature of the prayers themselves, which have been corrupted and perverted from those of the early ages.

In the Clementine Liturgy, and those prayers mentioned in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, they all run (as even that one for the dead which is unadvisedly left in the canon of the mass) in this form:—“*For all that are in peace or rest in Christ.*” Now, how can they be said to be in peace or rest in Christ, that are supposed to burn in the flames of Purgatory. If it shall be said that those are they who have

passed through Purgatory, the supposition that God's elect are subjected to punishment after death, the length of which is regulated in a great measure by what they have paid to sinful men, (who themselves require prayers for forgiveness,) is almost too absurd an idea to be reasoned about.

It would seem from such a notion, that the happiness or misery of the separate souls in Purgatory depended more upon the will or assiduity of those alive, than upon their own conduct while in this life, on their repentance, or upon the Almighty, who, it might almost be inferred from the belief of the Romish Church, forgot those unhappy souls, until reminded of them by purchased prayers, and by particular ceremonies used on the occasion. Why the prayers of men on earth, should be more favourably received for the dead, than the entreaty of those souls themselves, does not appear.

A passage in a sermon by St. Augustin, is quoted by Dr. Milner, in which this saint informed his hearers that—"Through the prayers and sacrifices of the church, and alms-deeds, God deals more mercifully with the departed than their sins deserve."\* The *authority* of St. Augustin for this, we are not told, and therefore it must pass for the mere assertion of an uninspired man, but if it were true, it does not go so far as to prove a place like Purgatory to have an existence. As well might it be said that the still common custom of Protestants praying, that God would have mercy on the souls of their dying friends, was an evidence, that they were believed about to enter into Purgatory on their death. As all have much to be forgiven, it will not be disputed that God deals more mercifully with us than our sins deserve, when he is pleased to pardon wherein we fail. In every case in which a man is received into His favour, this is true,—that it is more than he deserves.

Dr. Burnet remarks, in regard to prayers for the dead :—"Whether this practice is lawful and laudable, or otherwise, it seems to be founded on this, that the ancients believed

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\* Sermon 172. Enchirid. Cap. 109, 110. Translated in the text.



that the souls of all the dead, of what order soever, excepting the soul of Christ himself, were detained in Hades till the resurrection of the body, and that they who were not yet made perfect might receive some advantage from the prayers and offerings of the church.”—After referring to several ancient Liturgies, Dr. B. observes :—“ In all their offices relating to the dead, they always look with a stedfast eye upon the resurrection. Lastly, nothing is to be found, as far as I know, in the practice of the ancient church, that does not answer to this our hypothesis of the state of the dead and Hades, where all the souls that are separated from their bodies wait the coming of Christ, and the sound of the last trumpet.”\*

When the ancient Christians, then, prayed for the dead, it was only for the *completion* of the happiness at the day of judgment of those whom they apprehended to be already in paradise: it was for the Apostles, Saints, and Martyrs, and for the mother of our Lord himself, whom they certainly did not think to be in such a place as Purgatory, but they considered all those persons as continuing alive in spirit, awaiting the judgment of the last day, and members of the Church of Christ as well as those on earth.

The following have been given as reasons of praying for the dead :—While man is under the power of death, his body is in the grave, and although his soul be alive in the region of souls, yet even if it be there experiencing happiness, still, this happiness must be greatly inferior to what he shall feel when these two parts of his nature have been reunited, they enter into the heaven of their reward. Taking this into consideration, and that no souls have as yet been tried, prayers for the dead, though they may not be *necessary*, yet cannot be held *unnatural*; the thought, at least, is *charitable*, and shows good will towards those whom we should still consider as our brethren. The original doom lies upon their bodies, and in expectation of the greater happiness that awaits them, it is far from improbable that they

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\* *De Statu Mortuorum.* Translated in the text.

anxiously desire that this great bar to their supreme felicity be removed. They are, in fact, represented by the inspired writers as impatient for the consummation of their triumph, and it cannot be doubted that the faithful departed pray for us ; even the unhappy dead seem to have sympathy for the living : “ *I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s house : for I have five brethren ; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*” \* Whatever be in this, the *communion of saints* is a Catholic article, and implies something. The Scripture frequently applies the word *saints to the dead*. The Church of England does so, particularly in her festival of *All saints*. How is this *communion* kept up, if not (it has been asked) by prayer ? And if the saints departed pray for us, as many Protestants believe, is it not incumbent on us to keep up the communion by praying *for them*. We are taught to pray to the Father for the coming or hastening of His kingdom. *This* kingdom, therefore, is not yet come, and the departed saints are as much interested as we are in its arrival. This cannot be understood of the kingdom of Christ, which *now is* ; so it needs not our prayers for the hastening of it, and St. Matthew teaches us when the latter kingdom is to begin, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you.” This is the kingdom we pray for : that kingdom which, in as far as human beings either alive or dead are concerned, does not commence till Christ shall have delivered up *his* one. Consequently not to be *enjoyed* or inherited by any now ; but to be prayed for in faith and hope. At present the dead are under Christ’s kingdom ; and in that region where all the departed have gone, He reigns with his power disputed by none, and in a more visible manner than it can be said at present to be on earth. Many passages in Scripture seem to point to this conclusion, “ He must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.”

If the kingdom of Christ now exists, the faithful departed

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\* Luke xvi. 27, 28.

must certainly be at least included in it, but the *fulness* of happiness is reserved for the possession of the Father's kingdom, when we shall be kings and priests to God and ~~to the~~ *Father*.\* The *coming* for the second time of our Lord, refers to his returning openly *to the earth* to hold the court for general judgment, so his being at the head of the saints in Hades even now, is nowise inconsistent with his not visibly arriving at the earth again till the last day, or for the purpose of making the great and eternal separation between the good and the bad ; and it will be shown that this mansion of spirits can neither be on this earth nor within it.

In the first Liturgy of the Church of England, drawn up by Cranmer and Ridley, there is an express prayer for the dead, that God would grant them mercy and everlasting peace, and many great divines of the same church have thought prayers ought to be offered up for the souls of the departed, but only on the same principle that we pray for the dying, and in reference solely to the day of judgment at the end of the world. If we, therefore, freely admit that such prayers as those referred to in the primitive times and long after, might avail our deceased friends on their resurrection, as was then thought, it would not be the slightest proof of a belief in Purgatory.

The Honourable and Right Rev. Archibald Campbell,† in his *Primitive Doctrines restored*,‡ has a long and learned dissertation, entitled, *The judgment of several great and learned Protestant Divines, since the Reformation, concerning a Middle State, and Prayers for the Dead*, in which these prayers are at great length shown not to have been anywise founded on the notion that the dead were in a place of purification or punishment, out of which they might escape by prayers, which merely had a reference to saving their souls *on the day of judgment*.

It was customary among some of the heathens to pray for souls departed, but then their belief was, that judgment was

\* Rev. i. 6.

† Bishop in the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

‡ Folio. 1721.

pronounced soon after death, and that the punishment might be but temporary, or more or less lengthened according to circumstances. They knew nothing of a resurrection, and had no revelations of a last day, with a great and terrible judgment to be held at that time, by a Holy One who was to come with all the glory of heaven. The Jews also used prayers for the dead, but it was that they might be saved at the end of the world, when the soul was united to an immortal body, and then tried for the deeds done in this present life.

An old Calvinistic writer says that the church used to pray *for the completion of their glory*; consequently it was not held to be completed just after their deaths, and therefore they did not arrive at a state of the greatest bliss immediately after their departure out of this world. The above cited writer ascribes to a particular zeal, though unauthorized by the church, the favour which the Christians in those days used to ask of the martyrs, which was to pray after their decease for the surviving faithful, by which we may presume that the intercession of the saints in paradise was thought to be of great efficacy in those ages, but the request was made to them when they were alive upon earth, not when they were departed. Whatever sense may be given to the prayers of the primitive Christians for disembodied souls, it is certain that they were practised in the time of Constantine the Great, since the people prayed for his soul, as Eusebius informs us in his life of that Emperor.

In Bingham's *Antiquities of the Christian Church*,\* the grounds on which the ancient church prayed for the dead, are thus clearly stated:—"That she did not do so on the supposition of Purgatory, appears evidently from what has been already observed out of the public offices of the church, that she prayed for all the saints, confessors, patriarchs, &c. and all other holy men and women from the foundation of the world, who were supposed to be in a state of rest and happiness, and not in any place of purgation or torment.

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\* Published in 1719.

And this appears further from the private prayers made by St. Ambrose for the Emperor Theodosius and Valentinian, and Gratian, and his own brother Satorus ; and the directions he gives to Faustinus not to weep for his sister, but to make prayers and oblations for her. For all these were persons of whom he had not the least doubt but that their souls were in rest and happiness.”—

“St. Chrysostom often bids his hearers remember that, whilst they prayed for the deceased party, they should not weep and lament immoderately as the heathens did, but give God thanks for taking them to a place of rest and security, which is utterly inconsistent with their going into the dreadful pains of Purgatory.” St. Austin both prayed in private for his mother Monica, and also speaks of the church’s prayers for her at her funeral, and afterwards at the altar ; and yet he made no question of her going hence from a state of piety here to a state of joy and felicity hereafter.” “It is certain these prayers were not founded on a belief of a purgatory fire after death, but upon a supposition that they were going to a place of rest and happiness, which was their first reason for praying for them, that God would receive them to himself, and deliver them from condemnation. Upon the same supposition some of their prayers for the dead were always thanksgivings for their deliverance out of the troubles of this sinful world.”—“A third reason for praying for them was, because they justly conceived all men to die with some remainders of frailty and corruption, and, therefore, desired that God would deal with them according to his mercy, and not in strict justice according to their merits.”—“They prayed for all Christians as a testimony both of their respect and love to the dead, as Epiphanius words it in the same place, that he believed, that they who were deceased, were yet alive, and not extinguished, but still in being, and living with the Lord. Whereas the soul is but in an imperfect state of happiness till the resurrection, when the whole man shall obtain a complete victory over death, and by the last judgment be established in an endless state of consummate happiness and glory ; the church had a par-

ticular respect to this in her prayers for the righteous, that both the living and the dead might finally attain this blessed estate of a glorious resurrection. It is observed by some\* that there are prayers yet extant in the Roman mass, which are conformable to this opinion, as that which prays that God would absolve the souls of his servants from every bond of sin, *and bring them to the glory of the resurrection.*”

“A great many of the ancients believed that the souls of all the righteous, except martyrs, were sequestered out of heaven in some place invisible to mortal eye, which they called *Hades*, or *Paradise*, or *Abraham's Bosom*, a place of refreshment and joy where they expected a more complete happiness at the end of all things.\* This is the known opinion of Hermes, Pastor, Justin Martyr, Pope Pius, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Caius Romanus, Victorinus Martyr, Novatian, Lactantius, Hilary, Ambrose, &c. Therefore, in praying for the dead, they may be supposed to have had some reference to this, and to desire that the souls of the righteous thus sequestered for a time, may at last be brought to the perfect fruition of happiness in heaven.”†

The oldest, and one of the most learned divines of the Episcopal Communion in Scotland of the present day—Bishop Jolly—insists “That a species of prayer for the dead was of the highest, even Apostolic antiquity, cannot be denied.”—“Till Christ's second coming,” he adds, “the souls of the faithful, although in the hour of death transported to joy and felicity inexpressible, are, however, in a state of progression, waiting and longing, but in divine tranquillity, for the redemption of their bodies by the resurrection in the day of judgment, when all, even the holiest, shall stand in need of mercy, according to St. Paul's prayer for his beloved Onesiphorus, ‘The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in *that day*.’”†—“We are commanded

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\* See Du Moulin Novelty of Popery, Book VII. chap. i. p. 459.

† Antiq. of the Christian Church, Book XV. chap. iii. § 16.

‡ “There is, indeed, no positive proof that Onesiphorus was then actually dead; but there is a very strong likelihood that he was; so strong in circumstances, that the great Grotius—gives it as his firm opinion, that he had been

to make prayers for all saints ; and surely the title *saints* belongs, in most eminent manner, to those holy souls, happy in paradise, with whom we are fellow-citizens, as being of the same household of God.'—"For this full and most glorious felicity the primitive church always prayed, including the highest saints, even the holy martyrs themselves, who are still below the altar. This noble army of martyrs,"—"is represented as praying, and with apparent longing, for this full felicity ; and in the mean time, receive, in their progressive state, increase of light and joy, of which the white robes given them are emblematical."—"And surely we may and ought to wish for the saints departed : what they wish and pray for themselves. The church, accordingly, still prays, with reference to that passage, as well as others, that God would 'shortly accomplish the number of his elect, and hasten his kingdom,' " \* (being that of *the Father*.)

A dangerous error has arisen in the Romish Church much worse than that of praying *for* the dead, which is that of praying *to* the eminently pious dead, that they would intercede with God for us, as any one might (and might lawfully) beg some devout friend on earth to pray for him, since the prayers of a righteous man availeth much. To address prayers to the souls of men supposed to be in heaven, and this from various parts of the earth at the same time, attributes to each saint the power of knowing what passes in many places at once,—one of the attributes of God himself, or to get out of that difficulty, the Romish Church absurdly makes God reveal to the saints the prayers, which they then repeat back to Him !

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called off the stage. He reasons from the Apostle's affectionate salutation of his family only, and sending his good wishes for its beloved head into the state of eternity."—"The language of the first reformed office, perfectly released from the pains and panic of purgatory, was quite in the style of St. Paul's inspired prayer for Onesiphorus :—'We commend into thy mercy, O Lord, all other thy servants which are departed from hence with the sign of faith,' &c."

\* The Christian Sacrifice in the Eucharist, &c. 1831.

“If we look to the Scriptures, we find no shadow of authority for all this, nor for any thing that could lead to it.”\*

The absurdity of such a practice is thus noticed in a declaration of faith by King James I. of Scotland:—“I reverence the blessed Virgin Mary as the mother of Christ; but I dare not mocke her and blaspheme against God, by praying her to command and controul her Sonne, who is her God and her Saviour: Nor yet doe I think that she hath no other thing to doe in heaven, than to hear every idle man’s suite, and busy herself in their errands.”†

The prayers of the primitive Christians for the dead suppose at least a middle state, where the fate of the soul is not finally fixed, and indeed without such a supposition, where would be the aim and tendency of these prayers? Purgatory, however, is a comparatively modern discovery, and only admits such souls as died in the state of grace; as, by the account of Roman Catholics, it is necessary to torment or purify, by some kind of fire, the souls of even most good men. This idea seems to have been taken partly from the Platonic belief that souls were so purified after the dissolution of their bodies. This philosopher, in one of his dialogues,‡ seems to acknowledge a tribunal where such souls, as in their lifetime had been guilty of slight sins, shall in the other world be condemned to temporary pains, proportionate to the crimes committed. The purest souls wing their flight direct to the Elysian fields, where they are freed from all evils, and complete their purification; after which they pass into a region of perfect and eternal felicity. The less pure souls shape their course to Tartarus; such as are curable to be healed, but the incurable to be tormented for ever.§

\* Scripture Revelations of a Future State.

† Life of King James I. Constable’s Miscellany, Vol. LVI.

‡ Entitled *the Phædon*.

§ See also Virgil’s description of the purification of souls, in his *Æneid*. Book VI.



In attempting to prove the existence of Purgatory, it is a favourite argument to urge the authority of the early Fathers of the Church ; for an example of which, I may refer to Gallitzin's *Defence of Catholic Principles*, where we find it stated that—"The writings of the holy fathers of both the Eastern and Western Church, most clearly prove that from the earliest dawn of Christianity, the belief of a Purgatory was general in the church." If this was really the case,—if the earliest Christian writers supported such a belief, and so interpreted Scripture, it ought to possess considerable weight with us ; but how stands *the fact*,—if, doubting such an assertion, we ourselves refer to the authorities mentioned ?—do they speak of *a Purgatory*,—a place of purification ?—of flames, spiritual or material ? *Never*,—nor is such a passage quoted as taken from their writings. Tertullian, Clement, Cyprian, &c. are named ; but what do they all concur in then ? Only in there being a middle state now existing, which is neither heaven nor hell. All must agree with M. Gallitzin, (who honestly make the investigation,) that—"It would fill volumes to quote all those passages from the holy fathers which prove the belief in *a third place*, and prayers for the dead, to be coeval with Christianity." This is a historical fact,—whether the early Christians were *right* in believing as they did, is another consideration. As Tertullian is an author of great authority with Roman Catholics, they cannot object to Protestants also referring to him, and it will be shown, that his belief is totally at variance with Purgatory ; which proves the necessity of our inquiring into the foundation of such assertions. Tertullian admits that *Paradise* is the region where the souls of the just go immediately on death, and it is true that he does not make it the same as *heaven*, for he says that they are only to remain in it *till the resurrection*. He speaks of *Hades*, as "*Limes medius qui interhiat*," a middle intervening state,\* and in the same tract, he describes paradise (which he also calls *Abraham's bosom*) a place of divine plea-

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\* Apologet. c. 48. p. 38.

santness, destined to receive the souls of the righteous. He also says, in his treatise *De anima*, that as our Lord's spirit went there, "*the saints ought not to think they would reach the highest heaven at once,*" or, "*disdain to wait in Abraham's bosom for the solace of the expected resurrection.*"\* Writing against Marcion the heretic, he says that the bosom of Abraham is a *temporary* receptacle for the souls of the faithful.† So, in his opinion, Paradise and Abraham's bosom mean the same place, as the temporary and intermediate mansion of souls after death, and before the resurrection of their bodies. When Tertullian thus speaks, he expresses the sentiments then entertained by *all* Christians, and he uses language which cannot be reconciled with the disbelief of an intermediate state, or a belief in Purgatory.

The Apostolic saint and martyr, Clement, St. Paul's disciple, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, acknowledges but one place in the middle state for the souls of all who have finished their course in charity or goodness, from the beginning of the world, and that place to be a safe and comfortable refuge and shelter to them till the resurrection; a place of glory, and therefore no Purgatory. St. Clement means by those who have finished their course in charity,‡ all the elect of God; all that shall be saved, without exception. For so he himself expressly tells us a little before the place cited. "In charity all the elect of God have finished their course: without charity nothing (or no man) is accepted of God." Far, therefore, was this truly apostolic Pope and Bishop of Rome from his degenerate successors in holding forth such a dream, as that a man who dies without charity or the love of God, shall be yet saved at last by Purgatory. Again, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, which is affirmed to be his by the learned men of the Church of Rome, with very probable reason, (and is undoubtedly of the very first antiquity,)

\* C. 55. p. 304. translated in the text.

† Lib. iv. c. 34.

‡ *Charity* is here used in a more extended sense than the mere giving of alms to those who stand in need, and is so in most places of Scripture where it occurs.

he does, as it were, professedly oppose the superstition of Purgatory ; for in the eighth Chap. he writes, that we should “repent from the whole heart of the evils we have done in the flesh, that we may be saved of the Lord, whilst we have time for repentance. For after we have left this world, we can no longer confess or repent.” What sophistry is able to reconcile this with the Romish Purgatory ? Surely if there be no repentance (that is to say, repentance that will be accepted of or available) at all for sins in the next state, there can be no satisfactory suffering for sin there.

In Justin Martyr’s\* work called *a Dialogue with Trypho*, he affirms “that the souls of the godly remain in a certain better region, but unrighteous and wicked souls in an evil one; waiting there for the time of judgment.”† He must be very dexterous at reconciling contradictions who shall undertake to bring this doctrine to any accord with that of the Romanists.

The same excellent author, in his Second Apology, delivers this as the received doctrine of the Catholic Christians of his day ; that the souls of the wicked, subsisting even after death, feel punishment, but the souls of good men live happily. No good man, therefore, need fear a Purgatory after death, if this scholar of the Apostles, as he calls himself, was rightly taught. The happiness or pain which naturally arises to the mind from the power of conscience, may be, in one sense, termed reward or punishment, as already said, and as such, retribution may be felt in the middle state, and even while we are upon earth. It is on this understanding that the above author speaks of punishment before the resurrection, and not with any reference to the doom of the last day.

St. Irenæus, who lived after the middle of the second century, in his book, *Adversus Hæreses*,† says, that the disciples of Christ do go to an invisible place determined for them by God, where they are to remain until the resurrection, and

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\* This author flourished about the middle of the second century.

† P. 223. Translated in the text.

‡ Chap. 53.

speaks of paradise as the particular mansion for all the spirits of the just during the same time. An author, who most probably lived after the third century, in a work entitled, *Questions and Answers to the Orthodox*, states, in answer to the 57th Question, having said that there is no difference as to worldly concerns between the righteous and the wicked, he immediately adds, “But after death, *etvís, presently*, the righteous are separated from the unrighteous. For they are carried by angels into their meet places.\* And the souls of the righteous are conveyed into paradise, where they enjoy the conversation and sight of angels, and Christ also by way of vision; according to what is said, when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord. But the souls of the unrighteous are carried to the infernal regions.† And they (that is, both sort of souls) are kept in their meet places till the day of resurrection and recompense.” It were easy to refer to many similar opinions among the fathers. Were these at *variance* with Scripture, or were they only superadded to it, we should consider them, in the first instance, as absolutely of no value. But being, as they unquestionably are, in exact conformity with the express declarations of our Lord and his Apostles, we feel perfectly warranted in applying them for the confirmation of our faith, for they are consonant both to the letter and spirit of the gospel.

The rise and growth of the doctrine of Purgatory is plainly this. About the middle of the third century, Origen, among other Platonic conceits of his, gave out, that at the day of judgment all the faithful (the Apostles themselves included) shall pass through a purgatorial fire, the fire of the great conflagration, which they shall endure for a longer or shorter time, according to their imperfections. And in this conceit, although directly contrary to many express texts of

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\* This our Lord himself confirms in the parable of Lazarus.

† Although we generally understand *the hell of torments* by the term *infernal regions*, yet the latter did not anciently mean this, but only a temporary receptacle for souls good and bad.

Scripture, he was followed, for the greatness of his name, by some others. But how different is this Purgatory from the Roman !

Afterwards, about the end of the fourth, or the beginning of the fifth century, St. Austin began to doubt whether this imagined purgation was not to be made in the interval between death and the resurrection.

Towards the end of the fifth century, Pope Gregory, a man well known to be superstitious enough, undertook dogmatically to assert the doctrine. Four hundred years after, Pope John XVIII. or XIX. instituted a holy day, for praying for the souls in Purgatory, as if the church before him had been deficient in their charity, and forgotten the miserable souls there.

At length, the Popish convention at Florence, in 1439, turned the dream into an article of faith, so that now they are assured of hell who will not believe a Purgatory. The definition then given of the belief, against the sense of the primitive Christians, was, "that these souls, who have contracted the blemish of sin, are either in their bodies or out of them, purged from it, do presently go to heaven, and there clearly behold God himself," &c.—And this decree they made chiefly to establish their Purgatory, by which their power was considerably increased, and to induce a belief that the prayers of the ancient church for the dead were founded on a supposition that the souls of even good persons go into a place of torment, out of which they may be delivered by the prayers of the church, always provided there be a sum of money either left by themselves, or supplied by their friends on their account ! On the continent there are often to be seen ecclesiastical beggars soliciting money for the purpose of purchasing prayers to be offered up for the poor souls in Purgatory, and some churches keep regular begging establishments for this purpose,—while the *charity* is generally applied to enable their members to live in possession of the good things of *this* life, whatever they may be able to command in the *next*. The real items of the expenditure of this money would undeceive many, and it should be

remembered, that the value given is all mere assertion by men deeply interested in its receipt ; even supposing for a moment, that there is a Purgatory.

Thus, it will be seen, that it is not necessary for a man to give the church money in his lifetime to pray his soul out of Purgatory ; or even to leave funds behind him for this purpose ; or that any of his friends should be so charitable as to lay down the requisite sum for the special purpose of accelerating the passage of a particular soul ; but entire strangers may contribute to a general fund to obtain a speedy passage to heaven of souls which they never heard of, and in which they could therefore have no singular interest ! The only *absolute* requisite therefore is—*money* ! !

It must have appeared very strange to many, that so important a matter as Purgatory should have been so uncertain in the infallible church until the Council at Florence, and that among such a learned body, so great a difference of opinion should have arisen on the subject, if indeed they think it to be a truth. That it was not publicly adopted sooner ; must have evidently proceeded from all evidence of it being so dubious in its nature, and, from so stormy a debate, as the history of that Synod proves to have been the case, it could not even at that time have been rendered much clearer. No new light of inspiration is alleged to have come down upon them at that Council ; no new evidence to establish it ;—nothing then discovered to prove that such eminent Christians as Tertullian, Irenæus, St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, St. Ambrose, Clemens Romanus, St. Bernard, with a number of others, all had been wrong in their ideas of the state into which the souls of deceased men were to be made partakers on leaving this world.

Not only was the existence of Purgatory then first acknowledged by the Church, but an almost equally important discovery was made,—namely, that she had most extensive influence there ; and could shorten the soul's stay according as her clergy prayed often or seldom !—or, in other words, were well or ill paid.—While those poor spirits who were left to God to deal with as He saw best, fared worse

than if the affair was managed by the Church ! No wonder that such superstitious absurdities were guarded with the most jealous care, and all means of judging kept from the laity.

Under the pontificate of Leo X. ample powers were distributed, by which souls were to be delivered out of Purgatory for money, and a Bull of the Carmelites, called *Sabbatin*, takes every brother of that order out of Purgatory the first Saturday after his decease ! Pope Clement VI. issued an order to the angels to waft such souls to paradise as had gained the jubilee published by his Holiness. This order, if we may credit Cornelius Agrippa, in his treatise of *The Vanity of Sciences*, was extant at Vienna in his time, as well as elsewhere. The terms ran thus : “ We command the angels of paradise to introduce his soul into the peace of heaven, without its being obliged to pass through Purgatory.”\* If we are to believe the powers which the Roman priesthood claim to be in possession of, they must actually have such a command over the angels, and be in hourly, or at least, daily communication with them, in order to know so well as they pretend to do, every soul which goes in, and every one which comes out of Purgatory. They do not admit that their Church is now in a state of more enlightened improvement than in those days just referred to, or holding doctrines more pure, or more conformable to Scripture, tradition, or reason, but boast its continued infallibility. They do not merely promise to do their utmost by fervent entreaty with the Almighty, in the humble hope of succeeding, but speak as if there could be no doubt of their exertions being successful, if properly paid.

We shall now proceed to examine those texts from Scripture to which Roman Catholics refer in proof of their doctrine of Purgatory ; but, first, we shall consider the passage so often appealed to in the 12th chapter of 2d Maccabees.

In order to give them every advantage from it as it stands,

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\* See also Picart's Ceremonies and Religious Customs, Vol. II. p. 98.

I shall waive the objection against the Apocrypha not being canonical. Although since it is not so, it is proper to exclude it from our Bibles, yet this has been so *very* late a resolution, that its total rejection comes rather with a bad grace from us, if we will not allow it to give us any instruction at all. It is too presuming a reflection on the Reformed Church to say, that the Book which continued so long in the Bibles of our fathers, and was read from their pulpits, is unworthy of the least credit, because it is not of equal authenticity or authority with the *Old and New Testaments*; but it is not a Record of which we need be afraid in the present inquiry.\*

In the chapter mentioned, we read of, a battle fought by the Jews about one hundred and sixty-four years before Christ. After the engagement, it was discovered that some of the soldiers who were slain on the side of the Jews, had concealed things consecrated to idols, and forbidden by their laws. To remove this stain, a sum of money was collected and sent to Jerusalem as a sin-offering by their General—“doing therein very well and honestly in that he was mindful of the resurrection.† For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. And also in that he perceived that there was great favour laid up for those that died godly, it was a holy and good thought. Whereupon he made a reconciliation for the dead, that they might be delivered from sin.”

This passage is so far from countenancing the notion, that the spirits of those who have died in sin can be relieved from the sufferings which they are imagined to endure in the in-

\* In the Articles of the Church of England, it is said with regard to the Apocryphal writings, that—“the Church doth read them for example of life, and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine”

† When Roman Catholic divines quote this text, they generally make it a point to leave out these three words, on which the true sense of it rests. Their quotations ending with—“doing therein very well and honestly”



intermediate state, that the contrary is clearly implied ; for the historian remarks, that “if Judas had not hoped that they which were slain *should have risen again*, it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.” The object of the sin-offering and prayers, therefore, was not to deliver the souls of the slain from the pains of Purgatory, but to make an atonement and reconciliation for them, that they might be pardoned *in the day of the resurrection*, when the judgment is to be held.

Our Saviour’s descent into *Hell* is greatly trusted to for proving Purgatory. Those passages which relate to it in the Bible have already been explained in perfect accordance with a Middle State which cannot be a purgatorial one. *Hades* in these places has been translated by Papists to mean *hell—purgatory*, and a mansion they call *Limbus patrum* ; the latter, a fancied region in the vicinity of the hell of torments, believed by some to be the place where the souls of the saints and patriarchs were confined previous to the death of our Lord, and out of which he delivered them when his soul went to the world of spirits and while his body lay dead. *Limbus* or *Lymbus* is not a word to be found either in Scripture or in the works of the oldest Fathers of the church. It is confounded generally with Purgatory ; whether properly or not, I cannot say, but those who cannot prove them to be the same place, sometimes suspect that they are so. In the Douay Exposition of the Creed it is asked—“Did Christ not descend into *Purgatory* to free such as were there ?

“*Ans.* It is most probable he did, according to the first of St. Peter iii. 19, 20.”

In *The General Catechism*, Limbo is thus explained :—

“*Quest.* Where did Christ’s soul go to after death ?

“*Ans.* It descended into hell. (*App. Creed.*)

“*Quest.* Did Christ’s soul descend into the hell of the damned ?

“*Ans.* No ; but to a place or state of rest called Limbo. Acts ii. 24, 27.—Ps. xvi. 10.

“*Quest.* Who were in Limbo :

“*Ans.* The souls of the saints who died before Christ.

“*Quest.* Why did Christ descend into Limbo ?

“*Ans.* St. Peter says to preach to the spirits that were in prison ; that is, to announce to them in prison the joyful tidings of their redemption. 1 Pet. iii. 9.

“*Quest.* Why did not the souls of the saints who died before Christ go to heaven immediately after their death ?

“*Ans.* Because heaven was shut against them by the sin of our first parents, and could not be opened to any but by the death of Christ.

“*Quest.* When did the souls of the saints who died before Christ go to heaven ?

“*Ans.* When Christ ascended into heaven.” \*

These two Roman Catholic authorities seem evidently at variance. The one believes the *Hades* of St. Peter to be Purgatory, which last, by all accounts, is far from a quiet situation,—while the other thinks *Hades* is the same as *Limbo*, which is described as a place of rest, the residence of the Old Testament saints. It is not easy to argue from such premises.

Dr. Watts adverts to the above belief as follows :—“ Some of the ancients were of opinion, that the souls of the fathers, before the ascension of Christ, were not admitted into the Holy of Holies, or the blissful vision of Christ, but that it was our great High Priest, at his ascent to the throne, who led the way thither ; he rent the veil of the lower heaven,

\* To confuse our notions of this place still more, one traditional doctrine of the Roman Church inculcates the belief that Limbo still subsists, and is now allotted as an eternal habitation for the souls of all those children who have died unbaptised. The time when baptism became absolutely necessary even to children, as a qualification for heaven, is not said, or whether those are to gain admission who lived under the law of the Old Testament, which did not require baptism, but another rite instead of it. All children die in consequence of *original sin* continuing its taint upon mankind, but a punishment after death was never threatened, as before observed, except on sinners in their own right. All children whatever, in this view, are sinless, and our Saviour made no exceptions when he said, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

See as to this infantine Limbo—Pierce's Diss. on the Chris. Rel. according to the principles of the Roman Catholics. Vol. II. p. 100.

and carried with him the armies of patriarchal saints into some upper and brighter, and more joyful regions, whereas, before, they were only admitted into a state of peace and rest. Whether this be so or not, the Scripture does not sufficiently declare: but whatsoever region of heaven they were placed in, we may be well assured, from the very nature of things, that such transactions as the triumphant ascent of Christ, could never pass through any of the upper worlds without enlarging the knowledge and the joy of the blessed inhabitants.\*

There is here a good deal of confusion by Dr. W. "The place of peace and rest where the separate souls of the Fathers reposed in consciousness and a certain degree of bliss, must have been visited by the separate soul of our Lord, when his body was in the tomb; as *their* souls had gone thither on their respective deaths; and there never was any belief that when our Lord took his final leave of the earth, in a visible form, and ascended from it in sight of his followers, that he visited any of the upper worlds in passing, though it may have been that he did so. By "*upper worlds*," Dr. W. must have meant some of the stars or planets, for we know of none else, except the place called the third heaven, of which we can form but little idea. Our Lord's interview with the spirits in prison or in Hades, or indeed with any separate spirits departed from mortal bodies, (wherever they retire to,) was while his own body lay dead. Dr. W. seems to suppose this interview was in one of the mansions where the souls of the Fathers rested. The Scripture designates but *one general place*, as that which his soul went to, which nevertheless has been described by many different divines, so as to have *five* distinct situations: 1<sup>st</sup>, The Hell of everlasting torments. 2<sup>d</sup>, Purgatory, a place of temporary punishment for the sake of purification. 3<sup>d</sup>, Limbus, a place of rest for the souls of the Fathers, such as Abraham, Moses, &c. 4<sup>th</sup>, Paradise, considered the same as the Heaven of Heavens. And, lastly, a place under the general denomi-

nation of *Hades*, containing the souls both of the righteous and the wicked, although in separate situations of it, in its Paradise or Tartarus ; all, however, being there as in a place of safe custody. Which of these is most scriptural, my readers will now be enabled to judge.

Our Lord described the soul of Abraham as in paradise, and spoke of other souls being carried thither immediately on death : he told the dying robber, that he himself was going to the same place on that very day, and would take his fellow-sufferer with him as a reward for his faith. The Roman Church insists that Paradise is a name for the mansion of reward in the highest heavens, and yet if her Limbo contained the souls of the fathers at the time Christ was alive as a man, it must have been the same as his Paradise, or Abraham's bosom, a place of rest and happiness. I cannot discover with certainty whether Purgatory is believed to have existed at the same time as Limbo, or before our Lord's death, or whether it was then substituted for the other, as authorities (such as they are) differ ; but the admission of such a state as Limbo having once existed for separate spirits, is an admission that a middle place of rest out of heaven did, up to the resurrection of our Lord, receive souls, and was exactly such as I have endeavoured to prove paradise to be, if Limbo is understood simply as a middle region of happy retirement for the saints during a limited time.

If an intermediate place of rest for souls did thus once exist, where is the intimation that it ceased to be ? And where is the revelation of the creation of Purgatory, if it only was instituted after the resurrection of Christ ?—In short, if *Gehenna* and *Hades* be both translated *hell*, with one meaning, and *Purgatory* and *Limbo* be all jumbled together, while *Paradise* and *the Highest Heavens* are said to be one and the same place, there is no man can understand either of them in a consistent or rational manner.

Bishop Pearson, in his very learned Exposition of the Creed, proves from the writings of the most ancient of all

the Fathers, which are extant, that they—"were so far from believing that the end of Christ's descent into hell was to translate the saints of old into *heaven*, that they thought them not to be in *heaven*, yet, nor ever to be removed from that place in which they were before Christ's death, until the general resurrection. Others, as we have also shown, thought the Bosom of Abraham was not in any place which could be termed *hell*," (in the modern sense of it,) "and consequently could not think that Christ should therefore descend into *hell* to deliver them which were not there."

It should be remembered, however, that the bodies of some saints did arise at the same time our Lord's body did, and consequently that their souls must have also come to them again, but *when* they had formerly lived, or *who* they were, we know nothing for certain.

Bishop Porteus, when entering on this subject, begins with saying, that—"There is no Scripture proof of the existence of Purgatory : *heaven* and *hell* we read of perpetually in the Bible, but Purgatory we never meet with ; though surely, if there were such a place, Christ and his Apostles would not have concealed it from us." This requires some modification ; for there is a *third* place mentioned as distinctly as *heaven* and *hell* are, different from both, and also from Purgatory. *Sheol* or *Hades* will answer to none of these places, as has been amply shown.

In *The End of Religious Controversy*, the author remarks, in answer to the above argument of Bishop Porteus, that neither does the Scripture command us to keep the *first* day of the week, but the *seventh*, which was hallowed by God himself. This, however, is no answer at all, for Protestants do not assert, that they have any direct scriptural authority for giving up the Sabbath held sacred under the law, and substituting another day in its stead,—at least if any do, it must be without due investigation ; but the whole Christian world have, with one consent, thought it right to change the day which was held sacred by the Jews, to that one whereon our great Master arose from the dead, and the propriety of doing this has never been a matter of dispute

among Christians. The alteration of the time of a mere earthly observance, without divine authority, is very different from *instituting* such a place as Purgatory without a scriptural revelation. If they are admitted to be parallel cases, then it is in a manner allowing that Purgatory has no authority from the holy writings, and a giving up of any proof from them of its reality.\* But Dr. Milner insists that Purgatory is recognised in Scripture, and in order to prove it, cites the passage already considered from Maccabees. The great proof which he brings to his aid, as evidence of the fiery region *now* existing and tormenting sinners till they become sinless, is what St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "*The day [of the Lord] shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide . . . he shall receive a reward . . . but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*"† Here, whatever nature the fire spoken of, or its operation be, it is as plain as words can show, that it is not to come on sinners, or any other persons *till the day of the Lord*, and nothing can be more clear than that this day is the same with the last day of the earth, (as we now see it,) or the time of judgment, when, as we read in other places, the world is to be wrapt in flames.‡

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\* The Apostles met for prayer on the *first* day of the week, (our *Sunday*), as that on which Christ arose from the dead; but we have no evidence that they hallowed it by wholly abstaining from labour, or recommending this to be done, or that they gave up the observance of the Jewish Sabbath on the *seventh* day, (*Saturday*), as the one whereon the Creator rested from his work. The fact itself, of the earliest Christians meeting for prayer on the *first* day, does not prove that they also sanctified it by doing no manner of work, as was ordered by God with respect to *another* day; for the English and Roman Churches also meet on certain days besides Sunday, to commemorate important events connected with religion,—to keep in grateful remembrance those martyrs and defenders of Christianity who were God's instruments for establishing and transmitting the Gospel to us, and in order that we may imitate their steadfastness; but on the days alluded to, the ordinary businesses of life are also pursued as usual. Those of the Presbyterian communion likewise assemble for prayer on common working days. The hallowing of *Sunday*, as we now observe it, was of a much later date than the Apostolic age.

† 1 Cor. iii. 13—15.

‡ See 2 Pet. iii. 10—12.

Any allusion in the Scriptures to the purification of our natures by fire, in the first place, therefore, has no reference to the intermediate state inhabited by the souls only; and in the next, we have no evidence that as far as St. Paul meant to allude to the renovation of man, or to his trial at the last day, he meant his words to be taken in so literal a sense as to imply that fire was to be the means for either proving or saving him. His words, too, are, that the fire shall try *every man's work*,—now this cannot be applied solely to purgatorial fires, for it is only a favoured few who are said to be carried to Purgatory, in comparison with the numbers of those who (the Roman Catholics imagine) are ordered off to hell at once, as too bad and hopeless to be ever made better. They would fain lead us to infer, that St. Paul was mistaken in affirming these flames were not to burst forth till the day of the Lord, but are at this moment in full operation, and have been so since Purgatory was first established. The fondness for metaphor among the sacred writers was carried to a great length from the common usage of their times; and here, in as far as purification of sinful creatures is spoken of, St. Paul evidently took his simile from fire refining metallic ores,—separating the pure metal from the dross, which he naturally applied to illustrate the regeneration or purification produced by the grace of God upon us. The only fair question even as to our ultimate purification in both parts of our nature—body and soul—must be,—does the Apostle speak metaphorically or not of what is to happen to us *at the day of judgment*? Does he compare the all-searching power of God to that which fire exercises over the ores subjected to it, when it makes the metal flow out? or does he speak of an actual flame to purify us then in a similar manner? The *simile*, if it be allowed to be one, is beautiful and appropriate, and seems to me as much a metaphor as the assertion that all flesh is grass,\* or that our God is a consuming fire,† or where it is said, that returning good for evil heaps *coals of fire* upon an adversary's

\* Isaiah xl. 6.

† Heb. xii. 29.

head,\* or where the saints are described as having washed their garments white in the blood of the Lamb.† Who does not in these instances understand merely, that life is transient, and easily withered or cut down; that God is as powerful as fire, as resistless as a consuming flame; that benefits in return for injuries are nearly as hard to bear as fire placed upon the head; and that the blood of our Saviour being offered up as an atonement for sin, all who believe on him shall have their sins forgiven. Be St. Paul's words, however, interpreted as they may, it is clear they do not apply to a state now subsisting, unless it can be said that the day of the Lord is also come, and the end of the world.

Because it is written, that sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, either in this world or in that which is to come, it is inferred by the Church of Rome, that the world here referred to must be her Purgatory; which *ipse dixit* she does not attempt to prove by any other argument, than that it can be neither heaven nor hell, because when we get to the first, we shall need no farther forgiveness, and when cast into hell, we are past all mercy, as far as we can find from the Bible. Were it even proved that souls were decisively forgiven or held unpardonable before the judgment, it would not be establishing Purgatory, but that this was, while they were committed to *Hades*. To every candid mind the assertion that sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven either in this world or in that which is to come, must denote the impossibility of its being ever forgiven—and not certainly, that it may be pardoned in some state or condition different from either this world or the world to come. When our Lord said to any person on earth—"thy sins be forgiven thee," he did not think it necessary (in order to complete their being truly freed from their guilt) to make them undergo any accompanying or purifying torment by fire, or any other mode, and it does not appear from Scripture, that any was considered requisite to entirely free them from all previous guilt. The gift was free, and the

\* Rom. xii. 20.

† Rev. vii. 14.



word which communicated their pardon, was, no doubt, sufficient for their purification. It should be attended to, that in all these instances, the persons so forgiven, were left still in this world of temptation, and might sin again, to which the previous forgiveness might not extend, for the sins which *had been* committed, only were referred to. To one who was thus pardoned, our Lord said,—“go and sin no more,” and St. Paul, after being in a most marked and direct manner called by God to be an Apostle, acknowledged the possibility of his becoming a castaway, unless he persevered in constant diligence and prayer, and only expected to be saved if he fainted not. After death we are neither exposed to temptation nor liable to sin; so one pardon, then, may be sufficient for purifying us for heaven. Christ has power to forgive all the faults of his subjects, and who shall impute blame to those whom he shall forgive, or say that they are not pure whom he shall bless? An earthly king can only forgive offences against the law, but Christ is sovereign also over the moral world, and has himself expiated the sins of those whom he may be pleased to admit to the benefit of the sacrifice he made of his mortal life. “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”\* It is evidently to such that St. Paul alludes, when he says, “*he that is dead is freed from sin*,”† in some degree meaning, perhaps, not exposed to it, and farther, sin impossible.

In the Acts, it is said, that after Christ was crucified and slain, God raised Him up, “having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.”‡ In the Vulgate, the phrase—*having loosed the pains of death*, stands, “*solutis doloribus inferni*,” literally signifying—the pains of hell being loosed; which pains, the Roman Catholics apply to the separate spirits therein confined, on the understanding that *inferni* is to be held here the same as *Hades*, or a middle state; the same chapter explicitly asserting that the soul of Christ went to *Hades* on

\* Rom. iv. 7, 8.

† Rom. vi. 7.

‡ Acts ii. 24.

his death, and the proper interpretation of this word undoubtedly being a Middle State. Therefore, it is argued that this state is one where souls felt pain, and out of which our Lord delivered them,—consequently it was Purgatory, and the pain arose from fire !

In the original Greek of the New Testament, the word in question is *Θάνατος*, (*Thanatos*,) although in the Vulgate it is changed into *inferni*. The one word is not intended to be a translation of the other, but is a quite different one ; that in the Greek signifies *death*, and that in the Latin means *the world below* ; the dispute being simply whether the Greek or the Latin version is to be held the most authentic.

Romanists say—here is an evidence that our Saviour set open the gates to those who had completed their purification, and yet, if these were the gates of Purgatory, how can they make it agree with another doctrine of theirs, or what seems another doctrine, which says that the gates so opened were those of Limbo—a place of rest, which is inconsistent with pain. They argue, at one time, that this pain must have been tormenting, as in the case of Dives, and that this is the prison to which our Lord alluded when he said that the debtor should not come out until he had paid the uttermost farthing, quoting Calvin's belief, that Christ's soul descended into a hell of torment, which has been shown to be unfounded, and believed to be so by the Roman Church, if we take her opinion to be as represented by the College of Douay.

But whatever reasonings may be founded on the phrase as it stands in the Vulgate, a mere translation which this is, can be no authority against the Greek original from whence it was taken. If in any of the ancient copies of the Greek New Testament, the word *Θάνατος* is found to be a mistake, or at least, that any of them justify the translation of *inferni* instead of *mortis*,—the unseen world or *Hades*, instead of *death*, then the reading—"the pains of hell," for the pains of death might have more weight, but as the fact stands, we must adhere to the original, and there can be no dispute, that there, *Θάνατος* signifies *of death*.

In the *Ethiopic* version, the phrase is also of the same import,—“*vincula mortis*,” the chains or bands of death ; and in the *Arabic*, “*liberavit eum a doloribus mortis*,”—he was liberated from the pains of death.\*

We have been discussing the meaning of one passage as it stands in the original, but there are texts to be found in the Bible, which, in their original language, do speak of the pains of *the invisible state*, in reference to that wherein souls now are, and although these expressions may be said metaphorically to mean no more than the pains of death, yet there is also a middle state in Hades, wherein the wicked spirits are confined, and must feel great mental woe, as has already been repeatedly admitted in the preceding pages. There are no pains, however, that we read of, in that paradise where the souls of good men are now in the custody of God, and it is only the souls of such as these last, or those who are destined to be ultimately saved, that the Roman Church believes are admitted into Purgatory to be cleansed of slight or venial sins.

The sorrows of *Sheol* or *Hades* are mentioned in *Psalms* xviii. 5. The pains of *Sheol*,—*Psalms* cxvi. 3.—“In Hades being in torment,” &c. *St. Luke* xvi. 23. This last text clearly referring to the Tartarus of Hades, which was divided from the happy state by an impassable gulf. Dives is not represented as praying that his pains might be shortened, his soul purified and admitted into heaven,—only that his torments might in some degree be mitigated for a time, and he seemed to have considered his condition as utterly hopeless. Romanists admit this, but say he was in the hell

\* The whole text in the Greek we find to be as follows :—

‘Ὁν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνέστησε, λύσας τὰς ῥέδας τοῦ Θανάτου, καθ’ ὅτι οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν κρατεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ.—Which may be literally translated—Whom the Divinity raised up, having broken asunder the bands of death, or having loosed,—put an end to, the pains of death, since it was not possible he could be bound by it.

Compare also *Heb.* ii. 11. “That through death he might destroy him who had the power (το κράτος) of death—that is—the devil.”

of eternal doom, which the Jews could not have understood from the parable, as has already been shown; as the *hearers* of this parable must have taken it, so must we, unless it can be thought that it was not intended to be understood by those to whom it was first addressed, but only by those who were then unborn, and not to be so for centuries, which is too improbable a supposition to be adopted.

Although the souls of such good men as Abel, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—men whom God highly approved, and concerning whom, Christ expounded the Scriptures to mean that the Most High *continued* to be their God;—although, I say, the souls of these men were in rest and safe keeping, yet it must be inferred that they were in no state of torment, out of which Christ delivered them, if he did so at all in a literal sense. But they continued under the power of death, one half of their nature being dissolved and in the tomb, while He who was to crush the power of the Serpent had not achieved his victory—the evil one who presided over that death which his wiles had brought upon mankind remained unconquered; but the moment Christ, of his own power, left the state of souls and returned to this world, reanimating his body, then he truly might be said to have burst the bands of death. After his ascension, we had then a mediator with the Father, and in this mediation the souls in *Hades* had an equal interest with those alive in the body, and may have even received the news more joyfully than their less enlightened brethren upon this earth.

Had the word *Hades* been in the Greek of the text quoted from the Acts, instead of *Thanatos*—yet even *Hades* is sometimes in the Scriptures put metaphorically to signify death, as we make use of grave, coffin, shroud, long home, &c. to express that a person is deceased. The *pains of Hades*, therefore, had this really been the expression in the original, would only have meant the pains of death, and this explanation brings the passage to agree with others in the same Record, which otherwise it would not do, and consequently in any other view would be misunderstood.

As it is only by the death of Christ that even any of those

good spirits, when reunited to bodies, shall enter heaven, his death may therefore be truly said to open the gates of heaven to them on their resurrection, but we have no authority for believing that any separate spirits of human kind are yet there.

We are referred by Romanists to the opinion of several Protestant divines, who argue, that the torments of *hell* are not to be literally *eternal*, because, say the latter, frail man, born with such a propensity to do evil, could not so deeply offend a merciful God as to be doomed by him to *never ending* punishment, and all shall therefore after a time get to heaven. From such a doctrine, says the Roman Catholic, hell, being but a temporary place of punishment, is exactly a Purgatory. But the last is said to be a place now subsisting and tenanted; whereas hell, in our ideas, and according to Scripture, is only to open its doors and disclose its terrors after the resurrection and judgment. As, however, the argument is founded on the mere opinion of a few, from what appears insufficient grounds, I shall not enter further on this point, than by observing, that we have only the same authority and degree of assurance of the eternity of heavenly joys, as we have of the lasting torments of hell, and if there be reason to doubt the one, so is there also for disbelieving in the other, in as far as we rely on the words of Scripture.

The doctrine of the final salvation of the wicked is expressly condemned in the 42d Article of Religion in the Creed of the Church of England, A. D. 1552, but some of her Clergy have nevertheless ventured to express their doubts. It ought always to be clearly understood that the hell here spoken of is the *Gehenna* of the Scriptures, the lake or furnace of fire, as it is metaphorically there called, not *Hades* nor *Tartarus*.

An objection against Purgatory has been taken from *Eccles. xi. 3*—where it is said, “If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be:” but this text likewise refutes the doctrine,

and can only be urged against it by those who either do not consider it properly, or do not understand it. The Roman Catholics distinctly lay down, that the fate of man is decided immediately on his death,—whether his eternal doom shall be heaven or hell; which decision they do not endeavour by their prayers to alter. They never pray that those condemned reprobates who they think are sent *to hell*, shall be released, and they believe that *all* those who go to Purgatory are ultimately destined for heaven; so the prayers of the Roman Church are only directed to *accelerate* the purification of the souls in Purgatory, in order that they may sooner reach heaven. Or, I shall let a priest give his own answer to the objection drawn from this text.—“Admitting that the Scripture here speaks of the soul after death, which indeed is highly probable, how does this make against Purgatory? We believe that there are only two *eternal* states after death, viz. the state of glory, and the state of damnation. If the soul departs in the state of grace, it shall be for ever in that state, although it may have some venial sins to satisfy for, which may for a while retard the consummation of its happiness. If it dies in the state of mortal sin, and an enemy of God, it shall be for ever in torments. Here are two everlasting states, which may be meant by the north and south of the above text.”\* I have noticed this argument here only because it is generally used by Protestants in this controversy: had it been omitted, they might have thought I had overlooked an important reference.

The most extraordinary part of the doctrine of Purgatory is the wonderful knowledge which the Roman Church pretends to have of what is doing there, and the exact time necessary for the operation of its purifying powers on every individual sinner. The heart of man can sin in its inmost recesses by its evil thoughts; as our Lord assures us, that merely *wishing* to commit sin shall be held criminal, although the act be not accomplished. Our moral

guilt, therefore, can only be known to God, who alone can search the heart, and judge even of actions from many circumstances which men cannot. No mere man can decide on the good or evil thoughts of another, so as to pronounce (as the Papal Church does) on his exact turpitude; for she pretends to know well the proper length of time which any spirit will require to be purified properly, and of the effective number of masses and prayers necessary to shorten the otherwise requisite burning.

As one illustration of the absurd consequences of a belief in the doctrines of Purgatory, may be mentioned a late curious Spanish lawsuit, arising out of the circumstance of a rich man having left money to the Church, sufficient (at the usual rate) to purchase *twelve thousand* masses for his soul, being himself evidently of opinion that he stood a very bad chance. The Church gladly accepted the whole bequest, but demurred as to the labour required. In this emergency, those on whom the services paid for, more immediately fell, interceded with the Pope for a curtailment, and he, under his own hand, certified and declared that *twelve* masses would have the same effect as *twelve thousand*—the truth of which, even we cannot doubt. So far, therefore, it was a clear case; but the heirs of the sinner claimed restitution on account of the stipulated work not being performed. The Counsel for the Church argued, that the end or purpose being obtained, evidence of which he held in his hand—(the Pope's infallible certificate) it came to the same thing—the *value*, in short, was given in return for the money—the soul having actually got free in consequence of the *twelve* masses. His Holiness first determining the number of prayers which should be efficacious, without any pretended settlement of the question with the powers in Purgatory itself, is almost too ridiculous even for Spanish credulity. If the holy Father could decide that *twelve* masses should be enough here, he might surely as easily have made *one* effect the purpose—and if in this instance—why not in all? If the Church has such a power, why go through even one such ceremony? She must have authority to give a passport for heaven at once, since she

takes the purifying of souls so completely into her own power, since so little seems to depend on their own turpitude, and when masses appear to purge from sin more than the unseen flames. How such documents could be forwarded to the departed soul, or how taken along with it, they do not pretend to show, but they certainly ought to be able to do so who are acquainted with how they receive the daily bulletin of purgatorial arrivals and departures. Perhaps the transmission might be made in some equally feasible mode as that by which the ancients sent a piece of silver to Charon for ferrying their ghosts over the Styx—putting the money into the mouth of the corpse, to the great satisfaction, most likely, of those who swathed it up ! \*

When a soul departs from this life, its journey is unseen by mortal eyes, and yet the Popish Clergy wish it to be believed that every one of them knows the very road which each soul takes to its appointed place ;—whether they direct their course to the highest heaven, to hell, or to purgatory, that measures may be taken accordingly ! Those who go to the two first, require no prayers, as they are supposed, at their eternal destination, as completely happy or miserable as possible, and as having attained to their final reward or punishment. It is only the souls who are obliged to take Purgatory on their way to heaven, that have any occasion for assistance by prayers from the earth. I confess myself unable to discover, or even to fancy how all this is found out by those who insist they know it, if it is not in some of the ways I shall presently notice.

In Bishop Hall's 38th Sermon, we find it affirmed, the Romanists had a belief, that on the day their saint, Thomas à Becket, died, 3033 in all the world died also ;† whereof

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\* The before mentioned lawsuit is detailed in *The Sun* newspaper of 3d Feb. 1832. No Roman Catholic will venture to urge its being there misreported, from any fundamental part of the case being impossible to have happened, else he would make a fatal admission for the doctrine of his church on the subject.

† Such a general and accurate census of those who then died, of course



3000 went to hell, 30 to purgatory, and only 3 to heaven, among which last was their saint. Some may perhaps disclaim such accuracy, but it would be nowise extraordinary, if these facts were known at all. If they admit that very few go to heaven immediately on death, and but a small proportion of those who die are worthy to be purified in purgatory, how come they to know, with any approach to certainty, those who *do* go either to heaven, purgatory, or hell?—of all which they ought to be very sure, before they take the trouble of saying masses for them, or considering them in a hopeless situation. They will admit the *inutility* of praying for those whom they believe so favoured as to gain admittance into heaven on their deaths; and as to the multitude who have gone to hell, the greatest favour they could do to *them*, in the first place, would be to pray them *into* Purgatory. From no attempts, however, being made to liberate souls from hell, we may perhaps conclude either that the Romanists think prayers for such souls would be to very little purpose, (supposing for a moment there are any in it,) or that they do not believe any go there but those who are without the pale of their church, and so not worth taking out.

The following is the copy of a paper stuck up some years ago in the principal churches of Madrid :—

“The sacred and royal *Monte de Piedad* of Madrid, has relieved from Purgatory, since its establishment in 1721 till November, 1826,

1,030,395 souls, at an expense of . . . . . £1,720,437

11,402 do. from Nov. 1, 1826, to Nov. 1827, 14,276

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1,041,797

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£1,734,703

The number of masses celebrated to accomplish this pious work, was 558,921, consequently each soul cost  $1\frac{1}{2}$  masses, or thirty-four shillings and fourpence”!

This is the *medium* rate at which a soul may be saved out

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must have been made up from supernatural returns; nothing less could have accomplished it.

of Purgatory, but, in particular instances, ~~it~~ must, without doubt, depend upon the deepness of individual guilt, and be paid for accordingly ; more masses being of course required in some cases than in others. The above must be acknowledged to be great seeming accuracy in the mode of keeping these accounts, but even if a Pope should certify them to be correctly taken down from the ledgers of the church, from the most authentic "*list of arrivals*,"—still, the question may be asked—how came his Holiness to know the truth of any part, but the number of masses, the money paid for them, and the *intention* (which Protestants think very doubtful) with which they were said ?

We may stand fairly excused here for withholding our belief from the assertion of any man's being acquainted with things which are unseen by him, and belonging entirely to the spiritual world, until proof is brought that they are revealed by supernatural agency, or by God himself, as he of old made communications to mankind. As Purgatory (were it actually to exist) must be at a great distance from us, and is out of sight and hearing, it seems undeniable, that in order to know what is doing in it, there must be some such mode of communication from it to each individual priest, as they cannot learn by intuition what they assert a knowledge regarding. If divine revelation, then, is the only way they can possibly acquire such a knowledge, how is this imparted ? Is it in dreams, or when awake, that they hear voices of unseen beings, or do they visibly receive angelic couriers ? If they can prove, or render probable the direct inspiration of God, special messengers, dreams, voices, or other supernatural way in which they gain their information, no one for a moment, who believed them, could doubt the existence of Purgatory, and that the news was true of what was doing there ; but to insist that they know what is neither to be seen nor heard by mortal men in a natural manner, requires *some* supernatural intercourse to be credited. If none of these is the real way in which they are made acquainted with these things, let them declare it, and not leave us in doubt any longer ; for a single message from Purgatory, or

the other places spoken of, would, *if properly authenticated*, make more converts to their faith, than any mere arguments or expositions they could use. They profess an anxiety to make converts, and if it is so, it must appear very unaccountable their keeping secret what must produce immediate conviction in others. Their silence on this not only prevents Protestants joining in the belief, but furnishes them with good grounds for esteeming the whole ~~theory~~ got up for the temporal benefits of the church which cherishes it. They might, indeed, as well bid us credit, on their bare assertion, that they knew what was doing in the moon; and if they did, many would rather believe them than that they knew what is going on in a place so completely out of sight as Purgatory.

Among the *legends* of the Church of Rome, the necessity of a belief in spiritual couriers had not been entirely forgotten to be referred to, but there are none of a *regular* post. We are told, indeed, of extraordinary messengers now and then as having arrived in haste, but it generally was on their private business, being the souls of men themselves, who are said to have on emergencies come back on a short leave of absence, in *visible forms* like their former selves, or at least with audible voices, to demand the masses which were to shorten their purgation, or to bear witness to the efficacy of those which had been said towards expediting their progress to heaven!!\*

The doctrine of Purgatory was concocted and received at first into the church in an age of the blindest ignorance and superstition, which has been since the beginning of the Christian era. It continued to flourish unquestioned when mental darkness in a great degree overspread the earth, while the Scriptures, where it was pretended to be found, were sealed up from all but the clergy, who waived anathe-

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\* See some Monkish fables of this kind in Picart's Diss. on the Chris. Religion according to the principles of the Roman Catholics, (Vol. II. p. 98.) and such are still to be found in many Popish religious works in present circulation.

mas in one hand, with absolutions and passports to heaven in the other, as the infallible standards of their power : with torture at their command for the body while on earth, and imaginary fire under their control for the soul when it escaped them here, they were enabled to enforce a belief that they ruled in the unseen world of separate spirits as absolutely as they did in this sublunary sphere, knowing equally well (if their own words were to be taken) what is doing in both. In the hidden dungeons of the fearful Inquisition, there were unanswerable arguments shown and enforced upon trembling disbelievers, but not always so strongly as to convince when the light of day again shone upon these unfortunate victims of the most diabolical cruelty.\*

Even a Pope could not help disbelieving in the Purgatory of his church, as we find from a Roman Catholic author, Du Pin, *de Antiqua Ecclesiæ Disciplina Dissertationes Historiæ*, where an account is given of Pope John XXII. as a great assertor of the doctrine of a middle state, yet not a purgatorial one. It is true, Du Pin calls it *an error* of his Holiness, and tells us that he retracted it *at the solicitation of his friends*, when he was dying, yet this author owns that the Pope was once well persuaded of the truth of his belief, that the middle state of souls was quite different from their being in such a place as Purgatory is described, and that he was once at great pains to propagate his own ideas of it, but

\* To try and to execute a living man for heresy, real or pretended, was not held to be the extent of their powers ; for they impiously assumed the office of the Divine Judge, and tried men *after they were dead* !! If found guilty, (no difficult matter, when none durst contradict the Holy Inquisition,) their effigies and their bones, if procurable, were burned, and (a very important part of the sentence) *their property left behind* was confiscated for the use of the Church, whose members were the accusers, judges, and sharers in the profits of conviction of those whose souls are probably in paradise ! The force of human folly, or lawless rapacity and impiety could scarcely go farther. Shall we join a Church, then, which insists on such credulity and such doctrines, as she insidiously advises us to do ? God forbid !

See Picart's Hist. Memoirs relating to the Inquisition.

was very much opposed in his endeavours. No wonder that he was so, for the adoption of his opinions would have lost to the church the gains they made by the deceit. From the form of this Pope's retraction, as given by the same author, he does not seem to have altered his opinion much, or at least it appears that he was very doubtful and suspicious of the new light which his friends had given him. The form begins thus : "*Et si forsan*"—and if perhaps, &c. which shows that he was far from positive that he believed wrong, but if it should prove that he had, why then his Holiness retracted expressly.

Those who believe in the doctrines of the Papal Church, and fully credit its influence in Purgatory, must feel much surprised that its Head on earth, the sovereign Pontiff himself, should be held to go there at all, however short time he staid. Can they who claim the power of taking all others out, not have sufficient interest to pray their own souls past it, or out in a moment when actually there?—when, without question, their supplications would far surpass in fervency all those they ever offered up from St. Peter's for the souls of any of their flock. We hear of *High Masses* being said long after a Pope's death for the benefit of his soul, by those who would certainly never think of praying for the spirits of the blest whom they believed to be in heaven, and at the height of their glory and reward,—so unless a Pope be made a saint, we must infer that his successor should direct all good Catholics to assist his progress by their prayers and masses.

There have been many Papists, (though few of late years,) who have died, and have been believed to have gone regularly to Purgatory, been prayed out in due course, without any suspicion of their having been saints all the while ; which fact has been only discovered many years after, when a regular and solemn investigation established it, and a canonization transferred their names to the Roman Calendar with all due honour ! Now, if they really were saints, they must have gone straight to heaven on their deaths, according to the Papal Creed, which was not discovered for sometimes a

hundred years or more. Therefore, while praying souls from Purgatory, the Roman Church show that they know not whether these be there or not.\*

If events in the spiritual world are known upon earth to the Roman Church, the Pope, as head of it, should be the person best acquainted with it, yet in the case of Pope John, we have an instance where no supernatural proof was given of the reality of Purgatory, and even still they do not pretend to such an assurance of their doctrine. At their courts held to determine whether a man has been a saint or not, a variety of opinions are entertained, a number of witnesses and records examined, proofs weighed—the soul in question having a professional advocate, and the devil is allowed another in opposition!! The *balance* of testimony is decided on at last, and the claim either allowed or refused,—proving incontestibly by their own showing, that they did not know where his soul had gone at death. Yet they come from such deliberations and gravely tell us, we may depend on their word that they *do* know the exact path each soul takes on its departure, and how long each one ought to be in its purification when it goes into Purgatory—how long they all actually do stay, and also the precise period which their masses make shorter the time!! “*Credat Judæus Apella!*”

If we admit, however, that saints go direct to paradise, and that many who are to be finally admitted are not to be at once allowed to enter into a state of happiness, how comes it that the latter case is never intimated in Scripture? Nay, if it be true, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus has

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\* There is a Court which decides on the canonization of saints, consisting of eight Cardinals and a Secretary, subject to the review of the Pope and the whole Conclave. It is a maxim not to enter on the inquiry in any case, until the person suspected of having been a saint has been dead at least fifty years, in order that none of his relations may be induced to give false testimony for the honour which a favourable decision would do them, or, in the language of the Vatican, declaring a deceased man *a beatified soul*. The requisites are martyrdom, undisputed miracles, virtuous lives, &c. This openly depending on human testimony, in such a matter, is an undeniable proof that they know nothing about the fate of souls after death.

See Picart's Ceremonies and Religious Customs.

no foundation whatever in truth and nature. The poor man must be understood to have been good, but there is nothing said of him in the parable, from which we can infer that he was singularly so : and he was no martyr. Yet when he died, he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom ! A Papist could show that this must have been a mistake, for that the soul of Lazarus must have been ~~carried~~ to *Limbus*, and only to have been liberated from thence on the resurrection of our Saviour ; his being said to be taken to Abraham's bosom was evidently intended to represent the *natural* course of all good, or blessed souls after death, and where he was, there were Abraham's and all the spirits of the ancient Fathers—in the Paradise of the Middle State.

It is plain that the Apostles knew nothing of an intermediate state of purification to good men, but believed that no sooner were the spirits of the good absent from their bodies than they were present with the Lord,—that must be to say, (consistently with other passages,) would be then at all times conscious of the more immediate manifestations of his power, and see more clearly the scheme of redemption. His presence in these regions may also, at least, at times, cheer them, to calm their impatience for his open acknowledgment of them before an assembled world, when the trumpet shall proclaim the day of judgment,\*

If St. John knew of Purgatory, we know not what to make of his declaration in the Book of Revelation in particular, when he says,—“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, *from henceforth* ; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” And this, he tells us, he heard by a voice from heaven, saying unto him, “Write.” But this declaration, in

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\* According to the Book of Wisdom, (which is canonical at Rome,) “the souls of the faithful are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them.” Whereas, on the contrary, the souls of the righteous, (as in that class, however low down they must be,) for which the Church of Rome prays, are in torment excruciating, suffering the fire of purgatory, from which their prayers and alms, &c. are intended to deliver them.

order to be reconcileable with the *new* doctrine which we have been considering, (for it is new in comparison with the Christian Scriptures,) should have run thus : “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, *but not from henceforth* ; for they shall *not* rest from their labours, nor shall their works follow them, till by suffering the pains of Purgatory for a time, they shall be purified, and *thus* fitted for dwelling with the sainted spirits who rest in peace and joy, and are represented as loudly expressing their happiness.” If this be a just interpretation of the communication from heaven, it affords poor consolation indeed under the trials and sorrows of life to those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith in his Son.

A belief in Purgatory rests mainly upon a preceding judgment, which we have already considered, and shown to be without foundation. I call upon the Roman Clergy to show how they know or think that Christ is *now* sitting for the trials of departed souls, and how this is at all consistent with their admission, that instead of judging any as yet, He is continuing to intercede for us, as our High Priest, with the Father ?

Neither Scripture, tradition, nor reason, can here bring a reconciliation between Christ being at one and the same time judging and mediating. Let the advocates for Purgatory answer this objection directly and unequivocally if they can.

In Gallitzin’s *Exposition of the Creed*—after quoting the words—“He ascended into heaven ; sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,”—it is said—“there his merits are continually pleading in our behalf, *there he is our High Priest* for ever”—“*there* he continually guides and protects his church, being with his ministers to the end of the world ; protecting them against the spirit of error and darkness, according to his repeated promises” \*—“FROM THENCE he shall come to judge the living and the dead”—“to give everlasting life”—“and to punish,” &c.†

\* Matt. xxviii.—John xvi. 13, &c.

† Defence of Catholic principles.



It is perfectly scriptural that our Saviour now mediates, and that he shall continue to do so until the time for universal trial, sentence, and execution. A previous judgment, therefore, is untrue, and so must Purgatory.

From what has now been said, it must be clear that whether a Middle State be admitted or not, there may be such a one as has been described, and still in nowise similar to the unfounded fancy of Purgatory. A belief in the one, therefore, does not imply a belief in the other, as they are quite different in the natures ascribed to them. The latter state has been here distinctly refuted on many grounds and considerations, some of which have never before been pointed out, and a true view of the controversy rendered distinct to every capacity.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A Critical Inquiry into the proper meaning of certain Hebrew and Greek words used in the Old and New Testaments, which clearly establish a Middle State.

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The same things uttered in Hebrew, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them, and not only these things, but the Law itself, and the Prophets, and the rest of the Books, have no small difference when spoken in their own language.

Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, by an ancient unknown Author.\*

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THE doctrine of a Middle State may undeniably be established by a careful investigation into the meanings of several words made use of in Sacred Writ ; and, as far as I can find, none ever made the inquiry with a knowledge of the languages in which these books were first written, and with impartiality, but were satisfied that no other conclusion could be drawn from them.

Those words I allude to are שְׁאוֹל (*Sheol*†) גֵּי-הִנּוֹם (*Gehinnom*) in the Hebrew ; ᾍδης (*Hades*) and γέεννα (*Gehenna*) in the Greek. These words ought to be interpreted in perfect accordance with the context to which they stand related, and should be uniformly translated by the same English words.

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\* Taken also by Mr. Parkhurst, as a motto to his Hebrew Dictionary.

† Spelt sometimes *Shaul* or *Schol* in English letters, according as the Hebrew is read with or without the points ; in the same way, *Keber* is by some written *Kober*.

It ought also to be attended to, whether the words in our versions *now* signify exactly the same as in the days when our translators first adopted them.

*Sheol* is by many translators considered as synonymous with *hell*, as this latter word is now commonly used, and where it was too obvious that it must bear some other meaning, they render it *the grave*, but it properly signifies the region or dwelling of the souls of the dead, which is the same as *the place of the departed*, because, as Bishop Horsley observes,\*—"the only general place of residence of the dead collectively, is that of the departed spirit." This word is rendered into the Greek by ᾠδης (*Hades*) in the translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew into that language by the seventy two learned Jews (hence called the *Septuagint* translation) about 250 years before the birth of Christ, and referred to by his apostles. *Hades* is now acknowledged by all the best scholars to refer exclusively to the unseen world of separate spirits, the truth of which, a very little consideration of the context in various places where the word is used, will clearly show *must* be its meaning.

It is well known that the word which we commonly translate *hell* is in the Latin *Infernum*. The Greek ᾠδης (*hades*) is the same as αἶδης (*aides*) which merely signifies a place out of sight, or invisible to us, as in Homer's *Iliad*, A. "Πολλὰς δ' ὑφθίμους ψυχὰς Ἀΐδι προΐαψεν." Dispatched a great many heroic souls to *Hades*—and is therefore put to signify the common receptacle of the souls of all men, whether they be righteous or wicked. Thus the ancient Greeks understood the words Ἀΐδης and ᾠδης, and they believed there were two receptacles in it, one for the good and another for the wicked.

*The Elysian fields*, according to the Pagan notion of them, were separated from *Tartarus*, or the dwelling of the wicked, by such barriers as were not to be got over, and by a river of fire, which prevented all passage from one to the other ;†

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\* Commentary on Hosea, p. 200. See also Bishop Patrick on Genesis, chap. xxxv.

† Virg. *Æneid*. Lib. vi.

so in the Scripture account, there is a great gulf mentioned which separates those who are resting with Abraham from the wicked which are in *Tartarus*. In the Book of Wisdom, the wicked are represented as witnesses to the glory of good men. "When they see him, they shall be vexed with humble fear, and shall be amazed at his wonderful deliverance, and shall say within themselves, *This is he whom we sometimes had in derision, and in a parable of reproach.*" Some may think that this prophecy refers to heaven, and not to the middle state, but as in the eternal states the wicked are to be in outer darkness, it is not probable that they have those in view who are in heaven, and it is not revealed to us that this shall be the case, but we know that in Hades the good and bad shall see each other, they being in one general although divided place.

Some of the greatest and most ancient of the Fathers of the Christian Church understood that *Hades* as used in Scripture meant *the common receptacle of departed spirits*. Vossius gives us a full account of this matter in his *Theses Theologicæ et Historicæ*, printed at the Hague in 1658. In his *Disputatio 6ta*. "Of the departed souls," he says that it is reasonable to believe that all saints go *ad inferna* to Hades; to a place of refreshment until the second coming of Christ. In the Commentaries on St. Peter's Epistles, which are attributed to St. Ambrose, or to St. Athanasius, but certainly of a very early date, it is said upon the fifth chap. of the Epistle to the Romans, "the good shall be *in inferno sed superiori*, in the higher hell, because they cannot ascend into heaven." Now in this place, hell, or *infernum*, can be no other than that part of Hades into which the souls of the just are immediately carried on their death.\*

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\* It is more to ascertain the ancient meaning attached to words relating to the invisible state, than to show the general opinions in the matter of the Fathers, that the present Chapter is directed, and these will be found to differ considerably from the sense in which we now understand them, but if we wish to know the true meaning of old writings, we must, of course, investigate the sense which was intended by them when first written, or as near these times as possible. It would be unfair to writers of the present day to

Thus, to be in *Hades*, or *apud infernos* in the early days of Christianity, signified only the being in one or other of the receptacles of Hades, and this may be easily proved by many passages out of the primitive Fathers, such as Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, Basil, Athanasius, &c. and the greater part of them did not imagine that the souls of the righteous, even after our Lord's resurrection, went up to the highest heavens, or indeed any higher than paradise, which they reckoned to be the highest place in Hades.

Vossius affirms that the Fathers who maintained, some that the souls of the faithful go straight to heaven, and others that they go to *Hades*, do not really differ, for both meant no more than that such souls are happy after death, and those of the wicked miserable; the happiest mansions in Hades must indeed be a heaven of happiness in comparison with this earth. None thought that either the righteous are so happy, or the wicked so miserable before the resurrection as they shall be after it, or that there are not degrees of happiness and misery in Hades. To say that the separate souls of all the good go direct to a heavenly state, meaning *paradise*, is very different from intending to affirm that they go to the highest heaven,—at once to the place of their everlasting reward.

Perkins, in his *Demonstration of the Problem*, says, “that the ancients generally assert that the faithful departed remain out of heaven in certain hidden receptacles without being allowed to see God until the day of judgment.” Now, these hidden receptacles are plainly *Hades* or *infernum*.

“We now come,” says Dr. Burnet, “to treat of *hell*. By which word, the Christian authors understood the place and the state of the damned, and of men and demons, wicked and miserable. The Latins by their *hell* sometimes denote

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interpret their works five hundred years hence, by the sense alone which their words may have acquired after that time, and very different meanings are often attached at different periods to the same words. It should be remembered that the principal writings which we are now considering, are at least eighteen hundred years old, and were written in a different language from the version in which we are used to read them by translation.

the state of the dead in general, which the Greeks call *ᾠδην* (*haden*), a state of absconding, or, if I may call it so, of invisibility, in which sense and signification it is used in the Sacred Writings, as by learned men has been abundantly shown. But use has obtained among many, that by the word *hell*, is understood the prison of miserable and wicked creatures, who are departed this life, and the place of their punishment and their torment, and that in regions under us according to the acceptation of the word.”\*

In the works of Josephus, the Jewish historian,† there is a discourse addressed to the Greeks concerning *Hades*, illustrative of the belief of the Jews relative to that place. As this will more fully confirm what has already been said of it, and prove the sense in which that people must have understood our Saviour’s words on several remarkable occasions, I shall quote from it what seems best calculated to explain these references.

“Now as to Hades, wherein the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are detained, it is necessary to speak of it.”—“This region is allotted as a place of custody for souls, in which angels are appointed as guardians to them.”—“The just are now indeed confined in Hades, but not in the same place wherein the unjust are confined.”—“For there is one descent into this region, at whose gate we believe there stands an archangel with an host; which gate when those pass through, that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not go the same way; but the just are guided *to the right hand*, and are led with hymns, sung by the angels appointed over that place, into a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world; not constrained by necessity, but enjoying the prospect of the good things they see, and rejoicing *in the expectation* of those new enjoyments which will be peculiar to every one of

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\* *De Statu Mortuorum*. Translated in the text.

† Josephus was born while Jesus Christ lived, and was, as he himself says, skilful in the knowledge of the sacred books of the prophets, being himself a priest, and the son of a priest.

See Joseph. de Bell. Jud. Lib. 3, cap. 7, sec. 3, p. 1148. Edit. Hudson.

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them, and esteeming those things beyond what we have here.”—“The countenance of the fathers and of the just, which they see, always smile upon them, *while they wait for that rest and eternal life in heaven which is to succeed this region.* This place we call the bosom of Abraham.

“But to the unjust, they are dragged by force *to the left hand* by the angels allotted for punishment, no longer going with a good will, but as prisoners driven by violence.”—“And not only so, but they see the place of the fathers and of the just, even hereby are they punished ; for a chaos deep and large is fixed between ; inasmuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it. This is the discourse concerning Hades wherein the souls of all men are confined until a proper season which God hath determined, when he will make a resurrection of all men from the dead.”\*

Such was the belief which it appears, not only from Jewish historians, but from Scripture itself, our Saviour found current among the people with whom he was pleased to live while he resided on earth. They had long been distinguished by the especial favour and protection of the only true God whom they worshipped when the nations around them were involved in the midst of heathen darkness and superstition, and all their Sacred Writings seem to take such a doctrine as understood. We have also evidence that their written and traditionary lore, preserved by their priests, was still more explicit than in their written law, but this was also much vitiated in other matters by additions of their own, so as not to be depended on except in as far as corroborated by the Old Testament. Although neither our Lord nor his Apostles, as far as we can now find, did see fit, or perhaps did think it necessary to confirm their traditionary ideas of it in every particular, yet both he and his Apostles alluded to many of them in such a way as to show, that the principal of them were correct. He spoke of the soul when *separated*

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\* Whiston's translation.

from the body, carried by angels at death to Abraham's bosom, a place situated in a region where the just and unjust were both confined or remained for a while within view of each other, but separated by an impassable chasm or gulf;—that souls in this state saw, heard, and could converse;—that they knew each other,—were happy or miserable according as their lives had been, and that even those among the unhappy were anxious about the fate of their friends left behind them upon earth.

Josephus mentions many more particulars, none of which were at least contradicted by our Saviour; but if we only admit those he confirmed, by speaking of them as true, it must be allowed that *Hades* and *Heaven* are separate and distinct places, the first being only a temporary residence, and the second an eternal one. Christ did not consider this as a doctrine of slight importance,—whether it was believed or not, even provided the ultimate resurrection of man was credited, and his eternal life in a future world,—for he reprehended the Sadducees for disbelieving *the continued life of the spirit*, and on different occasions his reasonings and moral lessons were grounded upon the souls of deceased men being alive, and upon the ideas which the strictest of the Jews entertained of Hades.

Bishop Burnet observes in his Exposition of the 3d Article in the Creed, that by Hell may be meant *the invisible place to which departed souls are carried after their death*, and therefore, that by our Saviour's soul descending to Hell is meant "his soul being removed from his body, and carried to those unseen regions of departed spirits among whom it continued till his resurrection."

Dr. Tomline, Bishop of Winchester, in his exposition of the same article, considers that by it is meant "that in the intermediate time," (between the death of Christ and his resurrection) "his soul went into the common receptacle of departed spirits."

The acute and learned author of the *Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion*, Dr. Samuel Clarke, Rector of St. James's, Westminster, in his *Exposition of the Church Ca-*

*techism*, explains the word *Hell* in the Creed to be "the invisible state of departed souls."

Sir Peter King, in his *Critical History of the Apostles' Creed*, proves, at some length, and with the greatest clearness and force, the existence of a place of departed spirits into which Christ descended in the interval between his death and his resurrection.

Dr. Nicholls, in his *Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer*, asserts the same doctrine, interpreting the descent into Hell, of Christ's descent into the place of separate souls.

Dr. Doddridge paraphrases the words, Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, thus :—"I am fully satisfied that thou wilt not leave my soul while separated from the body in the unseen world." He observes in a note that " $\psi\chi\eta$ , which is the word here used, can hardly be thought to signify a dead body, and *Hades* is generally put for the state of separate spirits."

Although the idea of the place of everlasting torment is now commonly connected with the English word *hell*, the original meaning of this word was no more than a hidden and invisible place, from the Saxon word *helan* to cover over. In this acceptation it is used as the translation of the Greek *hades*.

Dr. Doddridge also mentions that "Our English, or rather Saxon word *Hell*, in the original signification (though it is now understood in a more limited sense) exactly answers to the Greek word *Hades*, and denotes a concealed or unseen place." Dr. Campbell observes—"the term *Hades* signifies obscure, hidden, invisible. To this the word *Hell* in its primitive signification perfectly corresponded."\*

"The word *Hell*," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "used in the common translation, conveys now an improper meaning of the original word ; because *Hell* is only used to signify the place of the damned. But as the word *Hell* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to cover or hide, hence the tiling or slating of a house is called in some parts of England (parti-

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\* See Preliminary Diss. VI. part ii. 2.

cularly Cornwall) *heling* to this day, and the cover of books (in Lancaster) by the same name; so the literal import of the original word *Hades* was formerly well expressed by it." Dr. C. interprets the words in the Creed relating to the soul of Christ, that it should not be left "*in the state of separate spirits.*"\*

Dr. Johnson, in his Dictionary, very correctly gives as ~~one~~ meaning of *hell*, "the place of the departed souls, *whether good or bad*," and illustrates this by the words in the Creed—"He descended into Hell," and by Genesis xxxvi. 35. "For I will go down to *the grave*, to my son mourning."

The word *Sheol*, as used among the Jews, was derived from a Hebrew word signifying *to ask, to crave, to crave as a loan*. It therefore denoted, among that people, a place which is an object of universal inquiry, the unknown mansion, about which all men are anxiously inquisitive.

2dly, A place of insatiable craving; which characteristic is frequently assigned it in several parts of Scripture.

3dly, It implied that which is *sought for*, and is *to be rendered back*. *Sheol* is to be understood, not simply as a place of departed spirits, but as a region which is only to form their *temporary* residence, and from which at some future time they are to be *rendered up*; thus indicating an intermediate state of the soul between its departure from this world, and some future state of its existence.†

"As the region of the dead or place of the departed, *Sheol* or hell, is used in the Old Testament. But the Hebrew word for the *grave* is קבר (*Keber*), the receptacle for the dead body, but not of the soul, and, accordingly, the Hebrew word for soul, נפש (*Nephesh*), is never joined with *Keber*, but with *Sheol*, the term denoting the abode of departed spirits. The Hebrew *Sheol* is never used for the grave, though it is sometimes translated by this word."‡

\* Commentary on Matt. xi. 23.

† See Magee on the atonement, &c. p. 348.; and Horsley's Commentary on Hosea, p. 158.

‡ Bishop Hobart.

Bishop Lowth remarks,\* that where in our version, Jacob says he will go down to *the grave* of his son mourning,† *Sheol* ought to be translated *the state or place of the dead*, and not the grave. Jacob could not have expected to lay his dead body beside that of his son, whom he believed to have been devoured by wild beasts, and must have meant the place where he supposed Joseph's *soul* was lodged. Archbishop Secker asserts the same thing.

In the learned Vitringa's *Commentary on Isaiah*, he quotes this passage and several others in the Old Testament, in which he says the word *Sheol* ought to be translated not *grave* but *hell*, in the sense of a receptacle of departed spirits good and bad. "It is almost needless to remark," says Bishop Hobart, "that the word *Sheol* or *Hades*, in this passage, could not possibly mean the state of the damned."

In the opinion of the Jews, *Gehenna*, or the place of perdition, was situated in the lowest part of *Sheol*, but not to be inhabited by any description of beings till after the judgment. "It cannot be supposed that the writers of the New Testament were strangers to the popular belief of their countrymen, and of the heathen generally, with respect to the region of the departed. When they used the term *ades*, they undoubtedly did so in its settled, universal, and appropriate signification of the place of departed spirits. This was the signification which the authors of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament annexed to the term."—"The writers of the New Testament quote from the Septuagint, in which *Hades* is put for *Sheol*. They must therefore have considered *Hades* as expressing what *Sheol* does in the Old Testament, the place of departed souls or spirits."‡

According to Bishop Horsley, "The state of the departed spirits while they continue there" (referring to *Sheol* or *Hades*) "is a condition of unfinished bliss, in which the souls of the justified would not have remained for any time,

\* Lowth on Isaiah xiv. 9.

† Gen. xvi. 35.

‡ Hobart.

(if indeed they had ever entered it) had not sin introduced death. It is a state, therefore, consequent upon sin, though no part of the punishment of it. And the resurrection of the saints is often described as an enlargement of them by our Lord's power from a confinement in a place, not of punishment, but of inchoate\* enjoyment only."

It ought to be attended to here, that the liberation from *Hades*, which our Lord's blood purchased from the offended justice of heaven, was not the immediate setting free of all even of the souls of the good from that place, but only giving them a prospective certainty of it, and a more sure hope of entering into heaven by his means. In another place I have suggested reasons for the great probability of some souls, however, being then allowed to leave their confinement in Hades, but I hold that such liberation was and must have been immediately preparatory to the resurrection of their bodies which were lying in the earth. As we have no reason to believe but that very few bodies have so arisen, so must we also think that few separate spirits have as yet left the Middle State. We cannot suppose that from Hades they would go direct to heaven as mere spirits. Our Lord's soul returned to this world for its body, so must all departed souls.

In a high rank among the learned of our own times who have devoted their attention to expositions of the Scriptures, stood the late Rev. Thomas Scott.† His edition of the Bible, to which he added numerous notes, and published in six volumes quarto, sufficiently attests his labours and knowledge of Holy Writ. In a commentary on the 10th verse of the 16th Psalm, on which so much has already been said, he writes as follows:—"In *hell*—in the Hebrew *Li sheol*, *לשׁ אֲדָמָה*, Septuagint *Εἰς ᾠδον*, Acts ii. 27. 32. Many learned men interpret the two clauses of this verse to mean exactly the same thing, referring both of them to the body of Christ, laid in the grave, and raised before it saw corruption; but, as the

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\* Beginning, or preparatory.

† Rector of Aston Sandford, Bucks.

article concerning 'Christ's descending into hell,' in the very ancient form called the Apostle's Creed, though doubtless of something later date than the Apostolical age, is grounded on this expression, and the application of it; it is evident, that the compilers of it supposed something further was intended than merely being *buried*. And the original (as well as in the translation of the seventy quoted in the Acts of the Apostles) favours the idea of a distinct meaning in each clause. Both the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the Greek *Hades*, by which it is constantly rendered, denote the state of man, when no longer seen on earth. When spoken of the body, they signify the grave; when of the soul, they refer to that state in which the soul is without the body, whether paradise or hell properly so called.\* *Archbishop Usher*. The human nature of Christ consisted of body and soul: his soul was during the space between his death and his resurrection as certainly in the place of separate spirits as his body was in the grave; but when he arose, they were both called forth and united. *These words are never used but with respect to men between death and the resurrection;*"—(more strictly, to the souls of men) "and never concerning angels or the state of men after the resurrection: nor are they ever used when the burial or grave of an individual is spoken of. But they are applied both with respect to the grave and the place of separation, to good and to bad men in general, without much discrimination: and the representation given in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, seems to place Lazarus as well as the rich man in *Hades*, but in another division of it. Thus the pagans placed their *Elysium* adjacent to *Tartarus*, as two parts in the same region of the dead."

From the notice taken of the same verse by the Apostle Paul,† Mr. Scott argues that David had evidently spoken of

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\* It must not be understood here, that either *Sheol* or *Hades* is ever used in Scripture with regard to the mortal body of man, for it is not the case, and they are only spoken of in reference to the soul—as a receptacle for it alone.

† Acts ii. 27.

the resurrection of the Messiah, "who was indeed to be put to death, but whose soul would not be left 'in the place of separate spirits, nor would his body be suffered to lie in the grave till it began in the least to corrupt.'"

The opinion on this matter of Bishop Hobart seems to have been formed after a deep and extensive investigation. It will be found in the appendix to a funeral sermon before mentioned, and is as follows :—

"It is of primary importance in this discussion, to ascertain the correct meaning of the word which in this passage and many others of the Sacred Writings is translated *Hell*. If this mean *a place of departed spirits*, then, of course, the existence of this place is not only established, but also the descent of the spirit or soul of Christ into the same abode.

"The word *Hell* in our English translation of the Bible answers in the original to two distinct words *ᾍδης* (*Hades*) (Hebrew, *Sheol*) denoting merely a secret, *invisible* place, and hence applied to the place of departed spirits ; and *γέεννα* (*Gehenna*) signifying the place of final torment.

"There can be no doubt that the acceptation of the word *ᾍδης* or *ᾍδης* among the Greeks, was *the place of the departed*."—"The existence of a region where the departed shades resided was the popular belief of the Greeks and Romans, and was denoted by the *ᾍδης* or *ᾍδης* of the one, and the *orcus* or *infern* of the other. And it is reasonable to conclude that the Apostles would use the word *Hades* in its popular signification as denoting *the place of the departed*.

"But to denote the place of final torment, they employed another word, *Gehenna*, a compound of two Hebrew words, *גֵּי הִנּוֹם*, signifying *the valley of Hinnom*. It was originally a pleasant valley, planted with trees and watered with fountains, near to Jerusalem, by the brook Kedron. The Jews placed there the image of Moloch, to which they sacrificed their children. When these horrid sacrifices were abolished by Josiah, the pious King of Israel, the place became so abominable, that they cast there the carcasses of animals and the dead bodies of criminals, where they were consumed by fire. Hence the name of it was used to denote the place



of future torment, not only by the Jews, but by Christ and his Apostles.

“These two words, *Hades* and *Gehenna*, are indiscriminately rendered Hell in the New Testament. But wherever the former word *Hades* is translated Hell, the place of departed spirits is meant; and whenever *Gehenna* is rendered Hell, the place of the damned is denoted.”

A clear and comprehensive exposition and proof of a Middle State was given by the Rev. John Skinner,\* an old, zealous, and learned Clergyman of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, in the days of her persecution, when such a doctrine was by most Presbyterians held nothing short of downright Popery; and indeed, some from ignorance, may think a Middle State little better even still, not aware that it is now supported by some of their own most eminent divines. It has been made matter of reproach to Scottish Episcopalians, that their Church has taught this doctrine, but she fearlessly, openly, and confidently maintains it, and who is the scholar of either the National Churches of England or Scotland who has denied it, showing, at the same time, that his opinion is consistent with itself, and with the uniform tenor of Holy Writ, and without having been obliged to have recourse to such forced and unnatural constructions of the sacred writings as even plain common sense must reject? But the ministers of the Episcopal Church of Scotland claim no exclusive or superior wisdom or discernment in this matter—for they are joined by the most learned of all denominations of Christians, save those of the Roman Church alone, as the latter now believes. The Presbyterian Church, *as a Church*, rejects it in her Rule of Faith; but it has been, as before mentioned, long publicly taught by her Professors of Divinity, and their expositions remain unrefuted. The member of this church who will read the Dissertation on the question by Dr. Campbell, and then say that he and all

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\* Clergyman of Longside, and grandfather of the present Right Rev. Bishop Skinner of Aberdeen.

the eminent names here cited are completely wrong. I must feel rather confident of his own discernment and learning, and will probably shrink from exposing the feeble and contradictory arguments of those whom he may find to agree with him, when he comes to examine their reasonings and inferences.

In a *Letter to Norman Sievwright, M. A. in vindication of the Episcopal Clergy of Scotland, from his charge of innovations in politics and religion*,\* of which the Rev. Mr. Skinner was well understood to be the author, although it does not bear his name, this author writes as follows, after showing, by several quotations from Scripture, and from the works of the primitive Fathers, that a belief in an intermediate state is perfectly orthodox:—"If any Father delivers any opinion directly *contrary* to a clear, and universally obvious article or precept of Scripture, to be sure no such opinion is to be received, much less laid stress upon. But when, as in this point of dispute between us, the words of Scripture are not precise and decisive another way, I still do think, and so will every modest and peaceable Christian, that the *earliest Fathers*, as they are called, *may* safely, *yea must* undoubtedly be admitted as the best interpreters and judges. Now the consentient doctrine of the Fathers, as explanatory of and agreeable to Scripture, has been again and again shown to be, *that in the interval between death and the resurrection, the soul remains in certain invisible regions in a separate state, expecting the resurrection and judgment.* This middle, separate state, the Greek Scriptures call *Hades*: and is distinct from what is properly called Heaven or Hell. Into this state our Saviour descended. And it seems to be the same with *the Abraham's bosom*, into which Lazarus was carried, and with the *paradise* which was promised to the penitent thief. I need not point out to you the various places where the word *Hades* is to be found. But I would ask you, what your idea of it is, and what you think it signifies? You know that it is the Greek translation of the

Hebrew word *Sheol*, and that from many passages of Scripture it appears that neither the *grave* nor *hell*, (in our common idea of these two words,) can be said to be the proper meaning of the Hebrew *Sheol* and Greek *Hades*. You have, no doubt, observed that the proper Hebrew word for the *grave*, as denoting the receptacle of dead bodies, is *Keber*, (corresponding to which, in the Greek, is *Taphos* or *Mnemeion*,) which is a strong indication that the words *Sheol* and *Hades* must lead to another idea. The contexts themselves will discover that they signify more than the *grave*; for we read of *souls* being there. Ps. xvi. 10. as applied, Acts ii. 31. Ps. xxx. 3, and xlix. 15, and lxxxvi. 13, and lxxxix. 48. And of *torment* there: The sorrows of (*Sheol*) *hell*, Ps. xviii. 5. The pains of (*Sheol*) *hell*, Ps. cxvi. 3. In (*Hades*) *hell*—being in torment, Luke xvi. 23. Yet they cannot be said to convey the common idea of *hell*, as by *hell* we mean the place appointed for total and final *damnation*. For we meet with frequent applications of *Sheol* and *Hades* to some whom you will not venture to apply this to. And indeed where the Old Testament Scriptures seem to direct our idea to such a place, (which is but rare,) we find another word, *Abaddon*, made use of, which our translators have always rendered by *destruction*. Thus, Job xxvi. 6. *Sheol* and *Abaddon*, *hell* and *destruction*.—xxxi. 12. It is a fire that consumeth to (*Abaddon*) *destruction*. Prov. xv. 11. and xxvii. 20. *Sheol* and *Abaddon*, *hell* and *destruction*. And there appears to be some grounds for this, from the word *Abaddon* being, by St. John, (Rev. ix. 11.) said to be the name of the *angel of the bottomless pit*. Sure I am, that in the New Testament Scriptures, the place of final torments is expressed not by *Hades* but by *Gehenna*. So St. Matt. v. 29. Thy body into *Hell*.—x. 28. Soul and body into *Hell*.—xxiii. 33. The damnation of *Hell*. St. Mark calls it (ix. 47.) The *Gehenna* of fire. St. John (xx. 10.) calls it the lake of fire; and v. 14. Death and (*Hades*) *hell* were cast into the lake of fire. The same which St. Matt. (xiii. 42—50.) calls the *furnace of fire*, and into which we are there told the wicked are to be cast at the end of the world, at which time

the righteous shall shine in the *kingdom of the Father*. I need not object against imagining this word *Hades* to signify *heaven*; for no body ever entertained that fancy. *What then will you make of it? What sort of place must that be where souls go to, and which is neither heaven nor hell, nor the grave? Yet such a place the Scripture mentions, and calls it Hades.* The truth seems to be, that in the Scripture language, the separation of the soul from the body is called *death*; the receptacle of dead *bodies* is called the *grave*, and the mansion of separate souls is held forth under the Hebrew *Sheol*, and the Greek *Hades*: and the place of *final torment* is called *Destruction, Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, &c.* and the enjoyment of final and full happiness is called *the kingdom of the Father*. These are no new observations of mine.”\*

The meaning of these scriptural words cannot be more clearly shown to establish a Middle State than is done by Dr. Campbell in his dissertation on their import. The opinion of the Presbyterian clergy on Dr. C.’s elucidations of them, may be considered fairly represented by the words of his successor, (both as Principal of Marischal College and in the divinity chair) the late very Rev. Dr. W. L. Brown; a man, eminent alike for his learning and piety, and for his attachment to the Church of which he was so many years a most efficient member,—the last person who would naturally be suspected of eulogising works which inculcate similar doctrines to those of Popery. I am referring to a Sermon by Dr. Brown, preached on the occasion of the death of Dr. Campbell, in which, after the highest encomiums on the deceased, as a defender of Christianity and as one possessed of great knowledge of the Sacred Writings, the Rev. preacher says, that in the latter part of Dr. Campbell’s life “he favoured the world with a work, the fruit of copious erudition, of unwearied application, and of a clear and comprehensive judgment.—We have only to regret that the

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\* P. 68. The foregoing is slightly abridged.

other writings of the New Testament have not been elucidated by the same pen that translated and illustrated the Gospels. In this case, we should be possessed of a treasure of Biblical knowledge unpossessed by preceding ages."—Dr. B. afterwards expresses admiration "of his luminous views of religion," and resolved that his example should point out the path which he (the preacher) ought to pursue. We can have no doubt that the doctrines which the latter always taught fulfilled this promise, and that the work of his predecessor just referred to, in an especial manner was considered by him with the greatest deference, particularly so important a part of it as that which regards the Middle State.\*

What follows is abridged from Dr. Campbell's dissertation on *Hades* and *Gehenna*.

"Although commonly translated by the same English term, there is a real difference of signification between these Greek words, in the common version rendered *Hell*. That *Gehenna* is employed in the Old Testament to denote the place of a future punishment prepared for the devil and his angels is indisputable. In the Old Testament we do not find this place in the same manner mentioned. It does not occur in the Septuagint. It is not a Greek word, and consequently not to be found in the Grecian classics. It is originally a compound of the two Hebrew words גֵּהֶנּוֹם *ge-hinnom*, the valley of Hinnom.† The place was also called *Tophet*,‡ from the noise of drums, (*Toph* signifying a drum) a noise raised on purpose to drown the cries of the helpless infants sacrificed to Moloch. As this place was in process of time considered as an emblem of Hell, or the place of torment reserved for punishment in a future state, the name *Tophet* came gradually to be used in this sense, and at length to be confined to it. This is the sense in which *Gehenna*, a synonymous term, is always to be un-

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\* Dr. Brown himself left behind an unpublished work on Immortality, which, considering his long and intimate critical acquaintance with the Scriptures, must well deserve to be laid before the public.

† 2 Chronicles xxxiii. 6.

‡ 2 Kings xxiii. 10.

derstood in the New Testament, where it occurs just twelve times. In ten of these there can be no doubt ; in the other two, the expression is figurative, but it scarcely will admit a question that the figure is taken from that state of misery which awaits the impenitent.

“As to the word *Hades*, which occurs in eleven places of the New Testament, and is rendered *Hell* in all, except one where it is rendered *Grave*, it is quite common in classic authors, and frequently used by the seventy in the translation of the Old Testament. It ought never in Scripture to be rendered *Hell*, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians. In the Old Testament, the corresponding word is *Sheol*, which signifies the state of the dead in general, without regard to the goodness or badness of the persons, their happiness or misery. In translating that word, the seventy have always invariably used *Hades*. The state is always represented under these figures which suggest something dreadful, dark, and silent, about which the most prying eye and listening ear can acquire no information. The term *Hades* is well adapted to express this idea.”

(Dr. C. agrees with Bishop Lowth,\* that the custom of depositing under ground the bodies of the deceased, and the form of their sepulchres, have probably first suggested some gloomy notions on the subject. The *grave*, when personified, or used metaphorically, is more commonly exhibited as a gentle power, which brings relief from cruelty, oppression, and trouble of every kind ; whereas *Hades*, which regards more the state of departed souls than the mansions of their bodies, exhibits when personified a severe and inflexible jailor who is not to be gained by the most pathetic entreaties, or by any acts merely human.)

“Though our word *Hell*, in its original signification, was more adapted to express the sense of *Hades* than of *Gehenna*, it is not so now. When we speak as Christians, we always express by it the place of the punishment of the wicked

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\* See his 7th Prælectio.

after the general judgment, as opposed to *heaven*, the place of the reward of the righteous.

“Who, for example, would render the words of the venerable patriarch Jacob, when he was deceived by his sons into the opinion that his favourite child Joseph had been devoured by a wild beast, “I will go down to Hell to my son mourning” ? or his words when they expostulated with him about sending his youngest son Benjamin to Egypt, “Ye will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to Hell” ? Yet in both places, the word in the original is *Sheol*, and in the version of the seventy, *Hades*.

“It appears at present\* to be the prevailing opinion among critics, that the term, at least in the Old Testament, means no more than *Keber*, grave, or sepulchre. Of the truth of this opinion, after the most attentive and impartial examination, I am far from being convinced, though I acknowledge that by translating *Sheol* the grave, the purport of the sentence is often expressed with sufficient clearness. If it be said that an accident has brought a person to his shroud, or to his coffin, or to his grave, or was the cause of his death, we cannot infer that they are synonymous terms, yet I have heard no argument stronger than this for accounting *Sheol* and *Keber* synonymous.

“Canst thou by searching find out God ? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection ? It is as high as heaven ; what canst thou do ? deeper than hell ; (*ἄδου Hades*) what canst thou know ? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.”† Now, of the opinion that the word in the Old Testament always denotes *grave*, or sepulchre, nothing can be a fuller confutation than this passage. Among such immense distances as the height of heaven, the extent of the earth, and the ocean, which were not only in those days unknown to men, but conceived to be unknowable, to introduce as one of the immeasurables a sepulchre whose depth could scarcely exceed ten or twelve cubits, would have been absurd.

\* 1788.

† Job xi. 7—9.

“*Heaven and Hades* are commonly set in opposition to one another ; the one is conceived to be the highest object, the other the lowest. From what is literally or locally so, the transition is very natural to what is *figuratively* so ; that is, what expresses a glorious and happy state on the one hand, or a humble and miserable one on the other. In this way it is used by our Lord. ‘And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to *Hades*,’ *ἑς ᾧδου*. As this city was never literally raised to heaven, we have no reason to believe it was literally brought down to *Hades*, but only that from a flourishing one it should be brought to the lowest degree of wretchedness.

“*Keber*, the Hebrew word for *Grave* or *sepulchre*, is never rendered in the ancient relation *Hades*, but *taphos*, *mnema*, or some equivalent term. *Sheol*, on the contrary, is never rendered *taphos* or *mnema*, but always *Hades* ; nor is it ever construed with *thapto* or any verb which signifies to bury, a thing almost inevitable in words so frequently occurring, if it had ever properly signified a grave. This itself might suffice to show that the ideas which the Jews had of these were never confounded. I observe further, that *Hades*, as well as the corresponding Hebrew word, is always singular in meaning as well as in form. The word for *grave* is often plural.

“When mention is made of the spirit after death, its abode is *Hades*. When notice is taken of one’s making or visiting a grave, or touching it, mourning at it, and the like, the word is always *Keber*. In *Hades*, all the dead are represented as present without exception. The case is quite different with the graves or sepulchres. In the song of triumph on the fall of the King of Babylon, it is said, ‘Hell (*Hades*) from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming, it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth,’ &c. Yet their sepulchres are all distant from each other as the nations they governed, and those are represented as in *Hades*, whose bodies were denied the honour of sepulchre. It is by death, and by it only, that the spirit enters into *Hades*. The gate of *Hades*



is therefore a natural mode of expressing death, in as much as without any positive evidence, we should naturally conclude this to be the meaning of the phrase. But, we have sufficient evidence, both sacred and profane, that this is the meaning of the phrase when it occurs in Scripture. 'Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell (as in our translation) shall not prevail against it.' In the original, the words are *πυλαι ᾗδου\** (*pulai hadou.*) Hezekiah, in his thanksgiving after his miraculous recovery from what was thought a mortal disease, tells us: 'I said I shall go to the gates of the grave,' *εν πυλαις ᾗδου*; nothing can be plainer than that *pulais hadou* here means *death*. Our translators have not liked, as in the former example, to translate them *Hell*, as Hezekiah, who was a good man, could not be supposed to speak as if he thought himself going to Hell, and they have translated *hadou* the grave.

"I shall subjoin a few words on the manner wherein the distinction has been preserved between *Hades* and *Gehenna* by the translators of the New Testament; for *Gehenna*, as a name for the place of future punishment, does not occur in the Old. All the Latin translations I have seen, observe the distinction. All, without exception, adopt the word *Gehenna*, although they do not all universally translate *Hades*. The English translators have rendered both the Greek names by the word *hell*, except in one single place,† where *Hades* is translated *grave*. The common method, hitherto observed, has been to retain the word *Gehenna*, and translate *Hades* either *Hell* or *grave*, as appeared most to suit the context." Dr. Campbell, in his translation of the Gospels, reverses this method, and renders *Gehenna* always *Hell*, retaining *Hades*, which gives a much greater degree of perspicuity to the meaning of the original. The reasons given by him, are, "1st, Though English ears are not entirely fa-

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\* Matt. xvi. 18.

† It should be noticed that Dr. C. is here speaking merely of the best method of distinguishing these two words to the English reader, not that there are differences of opinion between him and other translators as to their respective meanings.

miliarized to either term, they are much more so ~~than~~ the latter than to the former, in consequence of the greater use made of the latter in Theological writings ; 2dly, The import of the English word *hell*, when we speak as Christians, answers exactly to *Gehenna* not to *Hades* ; whereas, to this last word, we have no term in the language corresponding.”\*

“From a passage in St. Paul’s 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, xii. 1—4. it may seem to some, at first sight, that he gives some reason to conclude paradise and heaven to be the same : (1.) I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. (2.) I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell ; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth ;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. (3.) And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell : God knoweth.) —(4.) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”†

“The Jews make mention of three heavens. The first is properly the atmosphere, where the birds fly, and the clouds are suspended. The second is above the first, and is what we call the visible firmament, wherein the sun, moon, and stars appear. The third, to us invisible, is conceived to be above the second, and therefore sometimes stiled the heaven of heavens. This they considered as the place of the throne of the Father Almighty, and the habitation of the holy angels. Now, it is evident, that, if in the 2d and 4th verses, the Apostle speaks of *one* vision or revelation only, paradise and heaven are the same ; not so, if, in these, he speaks of two different revelations. \* ‘My opinion,’ says Dr. C. ‘is, that there are two. 1st, St. Paul speaks of them as more than one, and that not only in introducing them, *I will come to visions and revelations* ; 2dly, They are related as two distinct events. 3dly, There is a repetition of his doubts in regard to the reality of this transaction, which, if the whole

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\* See preceding note.

† Or rather—according to Dr. Macknight’s translation—which it is not possible for man to utter.

relate ~~a~~ single event, was not only superfluous but improper. This repetition, however, was one necessary, if what is related in the 3d and 4th verses be a different fact from what is told in the second, and if he was equally uncertain whether it passed in vision or reality. *4thly*, If all the three verses regard only one revelation, there is, in the manner of relating it, a repetition unexampled in the Apostle's writings.' '\*

Not only, therefore, does an investigation of the meaning which the Jews annexed to the word *Hades*, establish that they by it referred to a Middle State for disembodied souls, but the same result may thus be made manifest from an inquiry into the understanding they had with regard to *Paradise*, the *Garden of Eden*, or *Abraham's bosom*, all as naming one place. The Jews evidently considered all these in the same light as the primitive Christians did. The heavenly paradise was the appointed residence of the souls of the faithful during the whole time of their absence from their bodies, and the Jews prayed that the dead might be received there, and *finally* obtain acceptance at the resurrection. It

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\* Dr. Campbell is another expositor of great authority, besides those formerly mentioned, who thinks there is no doubt that St. Paul is alluding in this passage to what happened *to himself*; but I have already suggested that we have some cause for being uncertain of this, and for believing that it is possible he may have referred to *another person* who had communicated these revelations to the Apostle. In *either way*, the scriptural relation may, however, be fairly considered as showing that paradise and heaven are distinct places, and that St. Paul refers to two different events by the repetitions he uses. Were the relation more doubtful than it is with regard to the distinction between them, still, the proof that heaven and paradise are two places, does not depend on this passage, which is cited merely to show that although in it they might at first appear to be the same, yet that it agrees with others where they are more clearly represented as distinct. In addition to what I formerly observed on this head, I may notice, that the "fourteen years" evidently apply to the time when the Apostle knew the man he was referring to,—not to the time of the vision. Now, if it be insisted that he meant to speak of a vision of his own, we must understand him to say that *he knew himself fourteen years ago*; an extraordinary mode of expression, and very unnecessary information.

was natural to take the name of what had once been a happy but temporal residence for man, in order to designate a blessed one for his soul, where it was to remain also but for a time ; and, since they considered their patriarch Abraham as at the head of their church, and his soul in paradise, that they should also call this place by his name. Beyond these names they had no other designation for it by itself. That they ever so termed what they called the Third or Highest Heaven—the place of eternal delight and reward—the holy residence of God and his angels—the Holy of Holies, where, at least, the Almighty manifests his presence and his power in the most open and direct manner,—must appear to any one who considers it for a moment, extremely improbable, while to those who will search into the question, such an idea will be seen to be impossible.

Dr. Adam Clarke observes in his commentary, that “*the Garden of Eden* mentioned Gen. ii. 8. is also called in the Septuagint the garden of Paradise. Hence the word has been translated into the New Testament, and is used to signify a place of exquisite delight. The word paradise is not Greek, but of Arabic origin. In Arabic and Persian, it signifies *a garden, a vineyard*, the place of the *blessed*. Our Lord’s words intimate that the penitent thief should be immediately taken to the abode of the spirits of the just.”

Dr. Whitby considers paradise as “the place into which pious souls, separated from the body, were immediately received.”\*

Dr. Doddridge also speaks of paradise as the abode of happy spirits when separated from the body, “that garden of God which is the seat of happy spirits *in the intermediate state*.”†

“Now, as in heaven, happy spirits are united with their glorified bodies, the place where they abide, when separated from their bodies, is not heaven, but a region of the place of the departed styled paradise.”†

\* Whitby on Luke xxiii. 43.

† Doddridge on Luke.

† Hobart.

Dr. Macknight states that the name of Paradise, besides denominating the place where our first parents resided in the day of their innocence, was also given "to the situation where the spirits of the just after death reside in felicity *till the resurrection* ; as appears from our Lord's words to the penitent thief."\*

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\* Commentary on 2 Cor. xii. 4.

## CHAPTER IX.

On the appearance of the Ghost of the prophet Samuel at Endor, and the Spirit of Moses at the Transfiguration.

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“Since we have spoken of witches,” said Lord Byron, “what think you of the witch of Endor? I have always thought this the finest and most finished witch scene that ever was written or conceived, and you will be of my opinion if you consider all the circumstances, and the actors of the case, together with the gravity, simplicity, and dignity of the language. It beats all the ghost scenes I ever read.”

Kennedy's Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron and others.

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A CAREFUL consideration of the extraordinary account given to us in the Old Testament of the coming of a spirit from the mansion in which it had been since the death of its body, must considerably advance our knowledge of the state of the souls of departed men, and although the spirit of the prophet made no communication of the secrets of the dead, yet the very fact of his visible appearance, his being able to see, to speak, and to hear, to come from his place of rest, and to return to it—all are wonderful, and of great consequence for us to be convinced of, if we can really take them in the plain and direct manner in which the story is told in Holy Writ.

Moses relates that the heathen had so strong a notion of a spiritual world of beings inferior to angels, that they built a superstitious practice upon it, of seeking their advice and

inquiring of them concerning things to come.\* We are not entitled to doubt all the instances of the actual appearance of the ghosts or spirits of departed men which are mentioned as becoming visible to mortal eyes in ancient times, or of men and women having supernatural power by the aid of evil spirits; but all farther communication between the spiritual world and mortals, by the appearance of any of the inhabitants of the former, seems to have been put a decided stop to since the time of our Lord and his Apostles; at which period heathen authors tell us the ancient oracles ceased to deliver any responses, and left the temples where they had for ages been worshipped. It has, no doubt, been maintained, that the heathen oracles were no more than the deceitful contrivances of their priests to impose upon a superstitious and ignorant people, and it may have been really so, indeed, in some instances, probably was the case, but there is nothing in the Bible against our admitting what was once the universal opinion, or that they were *demons*; a race of spiritual beings whose existence it affirms. The *δαίμονια* (*daimonia*) of the Greeks were both good and bad, and although our translators generally render this word by *devils*, they are always distinguished in the original from those fallen angels whom we read of as being cast down from heaven. Indeed, even in our English version of the New Testament, *daimonia* is in one instance translated *gods*,—in St. Paul's speech to the Athenians, where he tells them that they were too much given to strange *demons*. Not that every image of metal, or wood, or stone, which they fabricated and worshipped, was so inspired, but that the oracular voices, which predicted events, proceeded from demons, as was said to be the case at Delphos, Ephesus, &c. We are not to judge entirely by what now takes place, and because we are certain there are no such communications permitted in our days. We should remember that God himself appeared to men in old times, and angels frequently became visible on particular missions from on high. Human spirits

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\* See Deut. xviii. 9—12.

have also returned to the earth in visible forms, and the spiritual Being who was commissioned from God to make revelations of the future to St. John, told him that it was his fellow-servant, of his brethren that had borne testimony of Jesus,\* that is—the soul of a departed believer in Christ.

The critical remarks which follow, on the appearance of Samuel, according to the Scripture relation, are by Dr. Campbell, and will be found to combine his usual acuteness and knowledge, with natural inferences from the text:—

“It has been speciously supported, that in the Mosaic economy there was no express revelation of the existence of the soul after death. Admitting this to be in some sense true, the Israelites were not without such intimations of a future state as types, and figures, and emblematical predictions could give them. Yet certain it is, that life and immortality were, in an eminent manner, brought to light only by the gospel.† But from whatever source they derived their opinions, that they had opinions on this subject, though dark and confused, is manifest, as from many other circumstances, so particularly from the practice of witchcraft and necromancy, which prevailed among them, and the power they ascribed to sorcerers, justly or unjustly, it matters not,

\* Rev. xix. 10.

† We read in our translations of the Epistles, that our Lord “brought life and immortality to light through the gospel;” (2 Tim. i. 10.) which has led many sincere Christians to understand that He first made this great truth known to the world as a discovery proceeding directly from himself, or rather a piece of knowledge which, in common with his Father and the heavenly host, he being aware of, first communicated to man: but *Φωτισω* does not properly signify to bring to light, but rather to throw light upon, and accordingly, Mr. Gilpin, in his Exposition of the New Testament, renders the sense of the passage—that the gospel “hath now in Christ abolished death, and thrown a new light upon immortality,” which it assuredly did. This explanation deserves particular attention, in as much as great misapprehensions have been founded on the translation in this instance in our Bibles. So far were the Jews, before our Lord’s time, from having no ideas of a future state, that it is assumed in their Scriptures, and implied as an article of popular belief in the reputed heresy of the Sadducees.

See Acts xxiii. 6.; xxiv. 15.; xxvi. 5—7.



of evoking the ghosts of the deceased. The whole story of the Witch of Endor is an irrefragable instance of this. For however much people may differ in their manner of explaining the phenomenon which it represents to us; judicious and impartial men, whose minds are not pre-occupied with a system, can hardly differ as to the evidence it affords, that the existence of spirits, in a separate state, was an article of popular belief, and that it was thought possible by certain secret arts to maintain an intercourse with them. Our question here is not, what was revealed to that people on this subject? But what appears to have been the notions commonly entertained concerning it. Indeed the artifices employed by their wizards and necromancers alluded to by Isaiah, of returning answers in a feigned voice, which appeared to those present, as proceeding from under the ground, is a demonstration of the prevalence of their sentiments in regard both to the existence and to the abode of souls departed. For that these were the oracles intended to be consulted is manifest from the prophet's upbraiding them with it as an absurdity.\* From the narrative of what passed at Endor, it may be observed, that in whatever way the facts may be accounted for by expositors, it was evidently believed, at the time, not only that the evocation of the spirits of the deceased was possible, but that the spirit of Samuel was actually evoked. Of this, Saul, who consulted him, appears to have had no doubt. Nay more, the sa-

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\* The word "*absurdity*" seems here to be misapplied. Consulting the spirits of deceased men or of demons, might be *sinful*, as showing a want of reliance on God, or as being against his commands, but their doing so was not *absurd*, as the story under review shows, for Samuel told Saul what the latter wished to know, and from what Dr. C. says, it appears that he believes, and with good reason, that there might have been no deception on the part of the witch, but that she really brought the ghost of the prophet. The ancients may have thus occasionally attempted to consult the spirits of their late fellow-men after their deaths, but from the information which has come down to us, they seem more frequently to have applied to greater oracles, or those in the temples of their gods, which, in some instances, were supposed to belong to a higher order of beings than the souls of men.

cred penman who records their conversation, appears as little doubtful as the king. *And Saul, says he, perceived that it was Samuel, and Samuel said——.* The son of Sirach also, who is thought to have written two centuries before the Christian era, expresses himself on this topic with the same unhesitating confidence. To a brief account of Samuel's life and character, he subjoins—*and after his death he prophesied and showed the king his end, and lift up his voice from the earth in prophecy, to blot out the wickedness of the people.\** Josephus, a contemporary of the Apostles, relates the story, without betraying the smallest suspicion that it was not the soul of Samuel who, on that occasion, conversed with Saul.† So that whatever was the real case, we are warranted to conclude, that the reality of such appearances after death, and consequently of such a state of departed spirits as above described, were standing articles in the popular creed of the Jewish nation.”‡

Sir Walter Scott has discussed the story of the Witch of Endor in his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft*, but calls it a dark and difficult question, and leaves “to those whose studies have qualified them, to give judgment on so obscure a subject.” The remarks, however, of such a man, must be considered interesting; and I shall subjoin a part of them, on which I shall make a few observations.

Sir Walter appears to wish, if possible, to suggest some other explanation of the scriptural account, than that it really was the spirit of the prophet; but, although there are to us some very unaccountable things involved in the transaction as we find it recorded, we are not warranted in believing that the story is untrue, and only founded on deception. Sir W. after noticing what led to the interview, observes, that the—“Scripture proceeds to give us the general information, that the king directed the witch to call up the spirit of Samuel, and that the female exclaimed, that

\* Ecclus. xlvi. 20.

† Antiq. Lib. vi. c. 15.

‡ Dr. Campbell's 6th dissertation.

gods had arisen out of the earth—that Saul more particularly requiring a description of the apparition, (whom consequently he did not himself see,) she described it as the figure of an old man with a mantle. In this figure the king acknowledges the resemblance of Samuel, and sinking on his face, hears, from the apparition speaking in the character of the prophet, the melancholy prediction of his own defeat and death.

“In this description, though all is told which is necessary to convey to us an awful moral lesson, yet we are left ignorant of the minutiae attending the apparition.” “It is impossible, for instance, to know with certainty whether Saul was present when the woman used her conjuration, or whether he himself personally ever saw the appearance which the Pythoness described to him. It is left still more doubtful whether any thing supernatural was actually evoked, or whether the witch and her assistant meant to practise a mere deception, taking their chance to prophesy the defeat and death of the broken-spirited king, as an event which the circumstances in which he was placed rendered highly probable, since he was surrounded by a superior army of Philistines, and his character as a soldier rendered it likely that he would not survive a defeat, which must involve the loss of his kingdom. On the other hand, admitting that the apparition had really a supernatural character, it remains equally uncertain what was its nature, or by what power it was compelled to an appearance, unpleasing, as it intimated, since the supposed spirit of Samuel asks wherefore he was disquieted in the grave. Was the power of the witch over the invisible world so great that she could disturb the sleep of the just, and especially that of a prophet so important as Samuel; and are we to suppose that he, upon whom the spirit of the Lord was wont to descend, even while he was clothed with frail mortality, should be subject to be disquieted in his grave, at the voice of a vile witch, and the command of an apostate prince? Did the true Deity refuse Saul the response of his prophets, and could a witch compel the actual spirit of Samuel to make answer notwithstanding?”

"Embarrassed by such difficulties," as Sir W. acknowledges himself to be, he gives two hypotheses as attempts at explanation of the mystery; but these, he admits, are again subject to other objections.

We must, however, believe the account in the Bible to be true as related, and not substitute our own fancies, because we cannot explain every thing in a satisfactory manner, and especially as the real appearance of Samuel's spirit is confirmed, as Sir. W. himself notices, in other places of Scripture. To criticise an account in Holy Writ, and doubt the plain statements in it, the same as might be done to a modern witch story, is wrong; for we ought most certainly to view it in a very different light.

In the passage I have just quoted, the author speaks of the spirit of Samuel, as having been awaked out of *sleep*, and of having been *disrupted in the grave*; but there is no authority for saying that the ghost had been either sleeping, or in the grave; and, indeed, in the next page, Sir W. says that it was the sins and discontents of Saul which were the ultimate cause of Samuel's appearance, and—"had withdrawn the prophet for a space from the enjoyment and repose of heaven:"—thus also admitting the reality of his appearance.

We have little more reason to believe that the soul of Samuel was *in heaven*, than that it was in *the grave*. Both the king and the witch speak of bringing him *up*, and Samuel asks why he was *brought up*, meaning from the region of departed spirits, where they all, good and bad, were then supposed to reside in a great place, believed to be below the earth, which the ancients imagined to be of unlimited extent.

"In the conversation between Saul and the ghost of Samuel, the prophet said to the king—*To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me*, which does not imply that their condition would be the same, although each would have his place in the receptacle of departed spirits."\*

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\* Dr. Campbell.

To suppose the witch should be so bold, after the naturally described terror she was in on discovering the king, as to prompt any ventriloquial deception such as what the sacred writing terms "*the words of Samuel*,"—prophecies so unwelcome to the royal ear, and so like what we might expect the prophet to have uttered, is too much beyond all probability, and shows a very blameable want of confidence on the direct and plain statements in the inspired record, especially as the spirit or voice was so explicit on several most important points, announced, too, in sublime terms, as the will of the Almighty—the whole having come to pass as predicted.

Sir Walter's further notion, that the apparition might have been a good angel sent by God to personate or speak in the character of Samuel, and to the surprise of the witch who merely meant to practise a deception, can be believed by no one who will attentively read the passage, and if we were always at liberty to have recourse to mere conjectures of our own in opposition to what we find written, there would be no end to them, and none would know in what to have faith. It is as easy to believe that it really was the spirit of the prophet, as that of a good angel; and it could not be, of course, imagined that a witch, by the assistance of a demon, could bring a good angel down on any occasion, or that God would attend and assist their incantation, by ordering one of his holy angels to answer it by appearing *and joining in the deception!*

Sir W. in fancying the witch to have either practised or intended a mere act of legerdemain, does not sufficiently attend to the preliminary information, that the woman was enabled to exercise supernatural power *by the aid of a familiar spirit or demon*; and it is clear from Holy writ, that such an order of spirits were once allowed power over mortals, or to assist them when not controlled by a higher influence. Saul desired the woman to divine to him by her familiar spirit, and he evidently had no doubt that she could actually bring the ghost of Samuel, or that he conversed with the prophet's spirit, whose voice or style of speaking

must have been familiar to him. We are not at liberty to suppose, from any obscurity in the narration, that the woman merely meant to produce some phantasm to deceive, when Saul had such full confidence in her power by the aid mentioned, and he must have had strong reason for judging from similar cases with which he must have been well acquainted. Neither should we fancy that it was not the ghost of Samuel, but "some good being," or "benevolent angel personating him," for the one is as inexplicable as the other. It may now appear improbable to us that a familiar spirit should have power to bring a soul from Hades, even for a moment, but it is much more likely that a spirit should be brought from this place than from *Heaven*, or that region where bodies and souls reunited are to dwell for ever.

We read that the witch was enabled to see the form of the spirit, although Saul could not; her eyes were opened to behold what our eyes in their common state could not; so her vision must have been supernaturally assisted. Aided by such a powerful and wise Being as we may safely assume any "*familiar spirit*" must be, in comparison with man, it is rather making light of such to say, as Sir Walter Scott does, that "the witch was a mere fortune-teller," on a level, perhaps, with a Scottish *Spae-wife*, with the real extent of whose powers, the author must be more familiar than with those of the scriptural times. He owns, too, that the king, "in some way or other, obtained *the awful certainty* of his own defeat and death;" so here is an admission of an actual communication with the spiritual world on the occasion, and not in the least less wonderful if any other spirit had made it than that of the prophet. When the opinion of an author is, that the whole story conveys to us "*an awful moral lesson*," the circumstances related should not be examined with that incredulity which would reasonably endeavour to account on *natural* grounds for a modern apparition story.

The witch seems to have been enabled to bring the spirit of *any* deceased person, for she gave the king his choice

whom she should call. Sir Walter Scott appears to think that it was at the appearance of Samuel that she was so surprised and terrified, but this was plainly not the cause of her fright, for it was on finding out that the person before whom she had exerted her power was the King of Israel, who had put many of her sisterhood to death, and from whom, therefore, she had great cause to fear her own doom, as indeed, she herself says, suspecting a snare had been laid for her life. How she learned that it was Saul who had come to her in disguise, does not appear, but she had instant intimation of it when the ghost came at the bidding of the demon, who acted under her direction. She showed no fear at the spiritual being whom her power had raised, and it is not likely that she would, when she had a familiar spirit with whom she was used to be intimate, and who did her errands.\* We have no reason to suspect that Samuel threatened *her* for disturbing him, for he blamed the king, who indeed was the proper person to find fault with for it, not the enchantress, who exclaimed to the king—“*Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid.*” Evidently meaning *of himself*, or that although she had, as she expresses it, put her life in her hand, he would do her no harm. The king could only answer for himself—for the woman’s having nothing to fear from *him*; but he could not assure her with regard to the spirit: as to danger from which, she herself was the best judge what she had to expect.

The supposition that the witch did not expect the spirit of Samuel, but merely intended to deceive by some trick, and that she was afraid of it when it appeared before her, from its being entirely unexpected, proceeds greatly from the idea, that all such reported powers were only delusions, in the same way as these are sometimes now practised on

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\* “I have been looking at the passage again, said Lord Byron, and do not see that distinction you make about the witch of Endor having been afraid when Samuel’s ghost appeared, as an apparition which she did not expect.”

*Conversations on Religion with Lord Byron, and others, p. 235.*

the ignorant,—an idea not warranted when the realities of the accounts are so undoubtingly mentioned in Scripture, and no one can take them for *metaphorical*. Nothing can be more natural than to believe from the account, that the sudden disclosure of the extreme hazard the witch stood in, was the cause of her exclamation and apprehension ; it was fully adequate to alarm her as represented, and if it was so, why fancy another, for which there is no ground in the relation itself, and then give it as one reason for doubting the account being true exactly as we find it ? When she found that the great destroyer of her kind stood disguised before her, an actual witness of the power which he himself had proscribed, and attached the penalty of death to, it was no wonder that she at first supposed it a deep-laid scheme to entrap her in the most decided manner. To believe that the reason she was so startled—was the real appearance of Samuel's ghost, must presuppose that she was quite unaccustomed to such sights, and, in short, that no witches in those days could exercise a power over the spiritual world in any degree, and that they had no familiar spirits.

The words of Saul can be explained in entire consistence with the belief that it was not what she saw of the spirit that terrified her, but what she discovered on the appearance of it relative to the person before whom she was exhibiting a proof of her art. The meaning of them is as if he had said—Do not be afraid for yourself in consequence of what you have done before me, but tell me what you see :—the surprise and fear of the witch on account of her own life having made her too slow for the king's impatience to communicate what she saw. He was eager to discover his own fate, and this was his last resource, which might also fail him ; his anxiety to know whether the woman had succeeded must therefore have been intense ; and having the same as assured her that his visit proceeded from no wish to entrap her, we have no evidence but that she became quite composed.

If we take the scriptural account strictly as it is related, we must be satisfied that the king was perfectly assured of a supernatural presence. Indeed, those who affect to consider



the whole as a deception on the part of the woman, admit that Saul believed the appearance of the prophet's spirit although *they* do not, and they fain would get quit of the spiritual being by whose agency the whole was brought about, for if such supernatural agency is taken into account, a mere deception, such as an unassisted modern conjuror or cunning woman could now only practice, must appear to have been nowise likely to have been the case. Saul perceived that it was Samuel; now, although he may have been partly thus assured by the description given by the woman of the appearance of the spirit, yet he must also have been *in the same place* to have carried on a direct conversation with it, and there is nothing in this description of the appearance of an inhabitant of Hades, against our thinking it probable that the king really saw the spirit at the time they were speaking together, for the witch may have merely seen him first, or been alone sensible at first of his near approach. The actual appearance of the ghost to the king, however, can be but conjectural, since it is not directly affirmed. It is probable that the eyes of the king must have been supernaturally aided, before they could see a spirit;—*opened*, as the Scripture expresses it; but there would not seem to us to be any greater physical impossibility in our natural vision perceiving a spiritual being, than in hearing one speak. If Saul's ears were opened for the purpose, it is probable that his eyes were so likewise.

In the New Testament, we have an instance of the disembodied spirit of a man being seen by those alive on the earth, and this was at the Transfiguration on the mount, where the soul of Moses was rendered visible to several of the disciples.

“And behold there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.” “I grant it possible,” says Dr. Isaac Watts, “that these might be but mere visions, which appeared to our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, but it is a much more natural and obvious

interpretation to suppose that the spirits of these two great men, whereof one was the institutor, and the other the reformer of the Jewish Church, did actually appear to Christ, and converse with him about the important event of his death and return to heaven. Perhaps the spirit of Elijah had his heavenly body with him there; he never died, but was carried alive to heaven,\* but Moses gave up his soul at the call of God when no man was near him, and his body was buried by God himself,† and his spirit was probably made visible to mortal eyes only by an assumed vehicle for that purpose.”†

By a *vision* we commonly understand some representation of which our spirits are sensible while we are asleep; but we are expressly informed that at least part of the scene at the transfiguration was seen by the disciples when they were *awake*. They were heavy or overpowered by sleep when their master's whole appearance *first* changed, but they saw it when they awoke. He seemed to them too dazzling to look upon. St. Matthew describes his face as shining like the sun, and his raiment of a brilliant whiteness. They saw two *men*—two living beings like men—in conversation with Christ, having likewise a glorious appearance; the disciples heard these speak; understood what they said; but it does not appear that they took any direct notice of the disciples. The latter, while still strongly affected by their amazement, spoke to their Master when the prophets were departing, and then a bright cloud enveloped them. Why the disciples should be afraid in particular at seeing them *entering into the cloud* we cannot explain, for the whole scene was *deliberately* calculated to inspire fear in the spectators. The voice of the Father Almighty was heard coming from the cloud, addressed to the followers of our Lord. All this must have been far beyond a mere vision, or the unsubstantial pageant of a dream, as Dr. Watts *admits* the possibility of its being. The disciples were evidently allowed with their waking bodily eyes to behold an interview of glorious beings—the mission

\* 2 Kings 11. 11.

† Deut. xxxiv. 5—7.

† See Campbell's translation of Luke, ix 34

of the prophets to the earth, we are told, was in order to converse with Christ on the subject of his departure, and the meeting must have been of a much greater mysterious importance than is recorded. Connected with his departure was his going to *Hades*, and his reception there. Dr. Watts believes they may have conversed about our Lord's return to heaven, which may have been one topic in this memorable conference; but it is probable that his visit to the souls of the departed formed one principal object of the meeting, because during the time his spirit was to be with them, he as a man would be under the power of death, and his death, we are told, was the subject of this conversation. *Elijah* may have come from the highest heaven, as he left this earth with his body in a miraculous manner, and was therefore in that respect in a very different condition or state of preparation for it, from those whose bodies still rest in this subliminary scene of their pilgrimage. The spirit of *Moses*, on the other hand, had not its material body, as far as we know; and therefore we are justified in supposing, that it had come from the general receptacle of spirits. For the arrival there of so great and heavenly a Being as our Lord—one, too, who had just shown himself so warm a friend to the whole human race—who had given to both the dead and the living—to the separated souls as well as to those who were in the body, a claim through his merits to enter into heaven on the day, emphatically called *his day*, we may naturally infer there might be necessary preparations to make; that all the spirits, for instance, might be warned to be ready to receive him with every demonstration of honour. He had but a short time to stay, and intended to proclaim the glad tidings to them—that he had reconciled our fallen race to God. To the antediluvian spirits in particular, it would seem he intended to address himself, and therefore they may have had all to be convened for the purpose, and prepared to meet him. An immediate and general liberation from *Hades* he did not mean to promise to the disembodied spirits there, but even a certain prospect of being reunited to bodies, and of being sometime admitted to heaven, must have been intelligence fraught with exceeding great joy to millions of them. It is remarkable

that, of the two beings who appeared with Christ on this occasion, and who belonged to the race of man, one should be of a complete nature, and the other not. May we not therefore infer from this also, that one of them was from heaven, and the other from Hades, both summoned to the earth by our Lord to receive directions for his reception in Hades first, and afterwards in Heaven? The separate souls would receive him as their Head and King in place of Abraham, and all in Hades would own his indisputable right to reign over them. *His kingdom* was not of this world, neither is it in *heaven*, for there *the Father* will reign—~~all~~ in all, and we pray to the Latter that his kingdom may come speedily. Christ's kingdom *now is*, as before shown, and he shall reign till he has put ~~all~~ his enemies under his feet: the last of them is *death*, or he who brought death upon us, and has the power of it; which victory, we know, shall not be gained till the end of this world. The spirit of our Lord entered not into the mansions of the departed as a conqueror over ~~death~~, but as one under the power of that tyrant, for his body lay dead in the tomb, and the separate or disembodied condition of souls proves them to be suffering under the doom of death. The state of *death*, as has been proved, does not properly mean one of *insensibility*, but merely a *separation* between soul and body, and were the soul even to remain on the earth after death, we could not expect to see or hear it, when we did not see it during the life of the body, nor were then sensible of its presence but from the exertion of its bodily organs, which, when crumbled to dust, cannot, of course, longer indicate its existence to our eyes or ears in their present natural state. Our Saviour's victory in his own person as of the race of man, was when he reanimated his body ~~which~~ he had left in the grave, but he did not visibly triumph as a conqueror, until his ascension from the earth to heaven. At the last day he will utterly abolish death, or take that dread and awful power from our enemy altogether; thus gaining a general and complete victory, giving liberty to the captives, and securing them from ever again ~~undergoing~~ a like fate.



## CHAPTER X.

### The Parable of Dives and Lazarus considered.

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“The essential or fundamental parts of a scriptural parable never embody any ideas which are opposed to truth, otherwise it would be fitted to mislead us.”

Recognition in the world to come.

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THE Parable of Dives and Lazarus here deserves all the elucidation which can be given to it, and in order to bring it more distinctly before my readers, I shall insert it, as translated by Dr. Campbell.

“There was a certain rich man, that wore purple and fine linen, and feasted splendidly every day. There was also a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, that was laid at his gate, and was fain to feed on the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table : yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores. It happened that the poor man died, and was conveyed by angels to Abraham’s bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades, being in torments, he looked up, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and cried, saying, ‘ Have pity on me, father Abraham, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tortured in this flame.’ Abraham answered, ‘ Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst good things, and Lazarus received evil things ; but now, he is in joy, and thou art in torments. Besides, there lieth a huge gulf betwixt us and you, so that they who would

pass to you cannot, neither can they pass to us who would come thence !' The other replied, 'I entreat thee, then, father, to send him to my father's house ; for I have five brothers, that he may admonish them, that they also come into this place of torments.' Abraham answered, 'They have Moses and the prophets : let them hear them.' 'Nay,' said he, 'father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they would reform.' Abraham replied, 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one should arise from the dead.' "

When the above is referred to as any evidence of what is passing in the world of spirits, and the condition in which our souls shall be placed as soon as we are dead, many think it quite sufficient to say that—" *It is only a parable ;* " meaning thereby, that it is founded on what ~~was~~ not, and could not be the case in the ordinary course of things, but is to be considered entirely as a mere fable. Such theological reasoners forget that there is not one of our Lord's other parables which can be argued to be so completely grounded in illusion. All the rest of these they will readily admit to be taken from events and scenes which at least *might* have been ; and why this one should form a solitary exception to the other twenty-eight, (without the slightest intimation from Scripture that it does so) they could give no substantial reason ; for our Lord was as well acquainted with what was passing in the unseen world, as with the events around him on earth ; and had this story been impossible, or even thought so by our great Master's audience, it could have done no good. As the Jews really had such a belief current among them, he would have been encouraging it when it was not true, if such a story was absolutely impossible, from ~~no~~ such region existing as *Hades*, with a pleasant place of rest in it for the good after the labours and miseries of mortal life and trial, and with another place of a different description for the doers of evil.

"A Country Pastor," in his work entitled *Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State*, wishes to show that the

parable makes no real allusion to what takes place with regard to souls after death, and argues as follows :—

“Those who believe\* that the soul, when separated from the body by death, retains its activity, and consciousness, and sensibility to pleasure and pain, and that it enters immediately on a state of enjoyment or of suffering, appeal to several passages of Scripture, which appear to favour this doctrine, though without expressly declaring it : among which is the parable of Lazarus and the rich man ;† the one of whom is represented as being in a state of torment, although the end of the world is plainly supposed not to have arrived, as he is described as entreating Lazarus to warn his surviving brethren, “lest they also come into this place of torment.” And if all that is here told were to be considered as a narrative of a matter of fact which actually took place, it would be perfectly decisive ;‡ but all allow that the narrative is a parable, that is, a fictitious tale, formed in order to teach or illustrate some doctrine : and although such a tale may chance to agree in every point with matter of fact, —with events which actually take place,—there is no necessity that it should.§ The only truth that is essential in a parable is the truth of the moral or doctrine conveyed by it. Many, accordingly, of our Lord’s parables are not, though many are exactly correspondent with facts which actually

\* Which this author does not.

† If the parable can be understood to mean that such an event might in common course have happened, then it does expressly declare the truth of the doctrine, or what is the same thing, and the author of the remarks quoted allows, a few lines further on, that in such a case “it would be perfectly decisive.”

‡ Or, if without alluding to particular persons, the fact might have been essentially true with regard to some rich and some poor man, this conclusion would be the same.

§ Although there is no necessity in a parable for naming or even alluding to real individuals, or of founding on a certain event which actually did happen, yet if it supposes, and is grounded entirely on what could not have ever occurred in the nature of things, then it could not be supposed capable of making a serious impression on any one.



occur.\* For instance: in the parable of the sower, the account of the different success of the seed which fell on the trodden way side, in the rocky ground, among thorns, and on good land, agrees literally with what takes place daily; though no particular sower is intended even here: the object is to illustrate the different reception of the Gospel with men of different characters. On the other hand, in the parable of the good Samaritan,—in that of the king who destroyed the ungrateful guests who refused to come to his feast,—of the husbandmen who killed the servants and the son of the lord of the vineyard,—and in many others, there is no reason to believe that any such events did ever actually take place; it is enough for the object of the parable that it is conceivable they *might* take place, and that we should be able to derive instruction from considering how men *would be likely to act*, or how they *ought to act*, supposing such circumstances should actually occur. The parable, therefore, I think is not decisive of the point in question.”†

Here, any one will naturally remark, that all the other parables above mentioned are founded on natural and probable events, which, if they never did actually happen as described, yet *might* have happened in the usual course of passing events. This author allows that the first he refers to was one of daily occurrence; the next, of the good Samaritan, also certainly *might* have *naturally* been true in every particular, and so might the others; and yet he draws the inference, that the one of Dives and Lazarus could not with probability be similarly founded on natural events. Our Saviour *may* have alluded to particular persons, and to what had really taken place in a certain instance, for it is very fair to believe that, if there is a region to which souls are taken immediately on death, as described, the parable may have even been literally true in every part, but it is by no

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\* Although not all “exactly correspondent with facts,” in every particular, yet they are so in the main, and it is not contended that this one is so in all that is mentioned in it.

† Scrip. Rev. Pages 52—54.

means of consequence to be argued whether certain persons were meant, and it is not unlikely it may have been similar to the others also in this, that only what *might be* was meant, which was all that was required, but this assuredly was necessary to give it effect.

In the No. of *The British Critic or Theological Review* for January, 1831, we find the following passage: "From the parable of the rich voluptuary and Lazarus, for instance—little can be safely inferred, but the certainty of a future condition of reward or of punishment. The representation, after all, it must be remembered, is but a parable, and is probably so framed as to appeal to the popular and prevalent notions respecting the state after death." p. 7.

In order to show how little dependence we need place on the above exposition, I shall quote the same authority for another but much better founded opinion, as stated in a prior number of the same Review. "In this story, be it fact or parable, the disembodied soul is described as existing in a separate state of consciousness—a state of happiness to the good, and of miseries and suffering to the wicked. It is the main scope and purport of the story to place this doctrine in the strongest light, to convince the sensual and worldly minded that their 'good things' will cease, and their 'evil things' begin, as soon as their present life is ended; and to support the afflicted servants of God with the assurance, that death will at once place them with the other spirits of the just in paradise. This last consoling truth is, if possible, more confirmed by our Saviour's promise to the repentant robber on the cross."\*

The last opinion is the only one which can be consistently supported from Scripture, or, as a natural view of it.

It may be inferred, that since the soul of Lazarus was said to be immediately carried by angels after his death into Abraham's bosom, (that is, the place where Abraham's soul *was*, and, as far as we know, *is* so still) *and there comforted*; since our Lord adds that the rich man was *tormented*, and promised the penitent thief that he should be with him the

same day in paradise ; therefore, the state of the dead is not now one of insensibility, but of happiness or misery.

In the place to which the soul of Lazarus was taken, it heard, saw, and remembered ; the soul of the rich man entertained the greatest affection for those who were dear to him in the world, and was miserable. All this was said to be *immediately* after death, and *when those who had associated with them here were still alive on earth.\**

If this important parable can be taken as proceeding from a real foundation, such as all the others had,—if we can understand from it, that there is such a place as Abraham's bosom, to which souls are removed in a state of perfect consciousness on the change which we call death,—then several points of this enquiry would be answered in the most plain and satisfactory manner ; but, it has been disputed that any such real inferences can be drawn from it, although it was told, as already observed, by a Being well acquainted with all the secrets of the invisible world, and who therefore knew well whether he was speaking of a scene which *might* have been, or which *could not*. This, therefore, is of the greatest importance to consider ; and we can do it best by referring to the sense in which it has been viewed by some of the soundest theologians.

Sir Matthew Hale observes that—"though this be a parable, yet it imports the blessed state of a separate spirit or soul, even before the last judgment, and that it is so, our Saviour's words upon the cross to the crucified *thou import.*"

"It is true this is a parable," remarks Bishop Bull, "and accordingly several things in it are parabolically expressed ; but though every thing in a parable be not argumentative, yet the scope of it is, as all divines acknowledge. Now it

\* "A parable indeed it must be, as to many of its circumstances ; yet in its grand outlines it is doubtless continually verified."—"The five brethren of Dives are represented as thus indulging themselves on earth, while he was in a place of torment. *This fully proves the separate state ;* unless any man can think that our Lord would decorate a parable in a manner suited to mislead the upright inquirer."

plainly belongs to the very scope and design of this parable to show what becomes of the souls of the good and bad men after death."—"Our Saviour also spake this parable to the Jews, and therefore it must be expounded agreeably to the ancient tradition received among them concerning the state of separate souls.\* Now, whereas our Saviour saith of the soul of Lazarus, that immediately after death it was conveyed by angels into Abraham's bosom, we find it was also the belief of the Jewish Church, before our Saviour's time, that the souls of the faithful when they die are by the ministry of angels conducted to paradise, where they are immediately placed in a blissful and happy state. For the Chaldee paraphrast on Cant. iv. 12. speaking of the garden of Eden, that is, paradise, saith thereunto—"No man hath power of entering, but the just, whose souls are carried thither by angels." "

"I grant," says Dr Watts, "that this account of the rich man and the beggar is but a parable, and yet it may prove the existence of the rich man's soul in a place of torment before the resurrection of the body. 1st, Because the existence of souls in a separate state, whilst other men dwell here on earth, is the very foundation of the whole parable, and runs through the whole of it. The poor man died, and his soul was in paradise; the rich man's dead body was buried, and his soul was in hell,\* while his five brethren were here on earth in a state of probation, and would not hearken to Moses and the prophets. :

"2d, Because the very design of the parable is to show, that a ghost sent from the other world, whether heaven or hell,† to wicked men who are here in a state of trial, will not be sufficient to convert them to holiness, if they reject

\* More properly *Hades*, as in the original.

† The parable speaks neither of heaven nor hell, in the usual acceptation of these terms; and few writers attend to what, if they searched the Scriptures on the point, would appear to them a necessary distinction between these places and the paradise and tartarus of the Middle State. Dr. Watts was aware of the difference, but sometimes, as in this instance, has not attended to it, or has not thought that, while he had one meaning to these words, his readers would in general have another.

the means of grace and the ministers of the Word. The very design of our Saviour seems to be lost, if there be no souls existing in a separate state. A ghost sent from the other world could never be supposed to have any influence to convert sinners in this world, if there were no such things as ghosts there. The rich man's five brethren could have no motive to hearken to a ghost pretending to come from heaven or hell, if there were no such things as ghosts or separate spirits either happy or miserable. Now, surely, if parables can prove any thing at all, they must prove those propositions which are both the foundation and the design of the whole parable.

"3d. I might add yet further, that it is very strange that our Saviour should so particularly speak of angels carrying the soul of a man, whose body was just dead, into heaven or paradise, which he calls Abraham's bosom; if there were no such state or place as a heaven for separate souls,\* if Abraham's soul had no residence there, no existence in that state, if angels had never any thing to do in such an office. What would the Jews have said or thought of a prophet come from God, who had taught his doctrines to the people in such parables as had scarce any sort of foundation in the reality or nature of things.

"But you will say, that the Jews had such an opinion current among them, though it was a very false one; and that this was enough to support a parable. I answer, What! could Christ (who is truth itself) have said more or plainer to confirm the Jews in the gross error of a separate state of souls, than to form a parable which supposes the doctrine in the very design and moral of it as well as in the foundation and matter of it."†

In a late work by the Rev. Mr. Muston, he considers the nature of a parable in the same manner, and speaks of the

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\* It is quite allowable in common language to speak of the place for happy spirits in their disembodied condition as being a *heavenly* state, without meaning to indicate the *highest* heaven, in the same way as we call a very beautiful place, or happiness here, a *heaven upon earth*.

† Essay on the separate state of Souls, by Dr. I. Waits, § 3.

one we are discussing as follows :—"In the explanation of a parable, we are not indeed warranted to run the parallel too minutely between the literal and figurative senses, or to conceive that every recorded circumstance has some latent and moral meaning attached to it ; for it is apparent, that many things may be introduced into a parabolic picture merely to fill up the outline, and to give consistency and proper colouring to the entire scene. But the essential or fundamental parts of a Scripture parable never embody any ideas which are opposed to truth, otherwise it would be fitted to mislead us, and thus be manifestly repugnant to the character and objects of the true and faithful Witness. The expositions which our Saviour has given of his own parables fully show the truth of this remark ; and, in many instances, favour a more circumstantial application of figurative language than we might have been led to expect. And if, in the interpretation of the passage before us, we are guided by these obvious principles, there is no avoiding the conclusion, that the consciousness of individuals, and of things known to us in the present life, will accompany us into a future world, and contribute, in no small degree, to our happiness or misery. For this is a leading sentiment pressed in every part of the parable upon our attention. The rich man dies, and his punishment is aggravated by the recollection of his past conduct, and the knowledge of his relative circumstances. He distinctly recognizes Lazarus, and is perfectly aware of his happiness. Abraham, too, he discovers ; and is conscious of his relation to the Jewish people. It is taken for granted by the patriarch, that he possessed the full power of calling to mind the wide difference in point of character and circumstances which subsisted on earth between himself and the despised and indigent Lazarus.

"The rest of the parable rests on the same sentiment. It supposes the rich man to be acquainted with the impenitent condition of his brethren, with the necessity of repentance ; and with the writings of Moses and the prophets. And, in short, the whole parable is so constructed, that it may, we

conceive, be considered as containing the plain declaration of our Saviour's mind on the important subject before us."\*

Mr. Muston, in the above, appears to speak generally of the circumstances as referable to what shall be in "*a future world*;" but, founded as they entirely are in the parable as relative to the soul immediately after death, it will be seen to allude *solely* to the Middle State; or, in the words of the same writer, in another passage,—to "the mansion or state of disembodied spirits," (p. 95.) Although there was a great gulf or chasm between Lazarus and Dives, yet they are represented as being in the same *general* place or world, and perfectly within view and hearing of each other. Can it be thought even probable, that one of *the pleasures of heaven* will be that of seeing and hearing the damned tormented, or, that the place where Dives was in was the lake of fire reserved for the devil and his angels when their time is come: when compassion towards our fellow-creatures is so much inculcated here, surely the constant sight of their torments would make us in some degree unhappy even in heaven?

According to the Rev. Mr. Polwhele's understanding of the parable (which must also be that of every impartial person who considers it)—"If our Saviour had any design in the parable of the rich man, it was certainly meant to suggest to us that the souls of men after death exist in distinct habitations—that they are in a state of happiness or misery, as resulting from the unalterable nature of their moral characters,—that, with their moral characters, they possess their discriminating sentiments and passions, and they retain the memory of their earthly transactions and connections."† Both the situations for the good and the bad, while in a disembodied state, are spoken of as in *Heaven*. "Though they

\* Recognition in the world to come.

† An Essay on the Evidence from Scripture, that the soul, immediately after the death of the body, is not in a state of sleep or insensibility, but of happiness or misery, &c. printed at the request of the Church Union Society, being their Prize Essay of 1818.

are said to be at a great distance from each other, they are still within sight and hearing, so as to be able to converse together. This would have been too gross a violation of probability, if the one was considered as inhabiting the highest heavens, and the other placed in the infernal regions. Again, the expressions used are such as entirely to suit this explanation, and no other; for, *1st*, The distance from each other is mentioned, but no hint that the one was higher in situation than the other. *2dly*, The terms whereby motion from the one to the other is expressed, are such as are never employed in expressing motion to, or from heaven, but always when the places are on a level, or nearly so. Thus Lazarus, when dead, is said *to be carried away*, not to be *carried up*, by angels into Abraham's bosom, whereas it is the latter of these expressions, or a similar one, as *taken up*, that is always used when an assumption into heaven is spoken of, or whenever one is said to be conveyed from a lower to a higher situation. But, what is still more decisive in this way, where mention is made of passing from Abraham to the rich man, and inversely, the Greek verbs employed are words which always denote motion *on the same ground* or level."\*

These explanations of the text by Dr. Campbell, agreeing so exactly with the circumstances of the story, must be true, if, as the Rev. Dr. observes, the sacred penmen wrote to be understood, when they must have employed words and phrases in conformity to the current usage of those for whom they wrote.

It has been already shown, that the Jewish writers in the Old Testament used the word *Sheol* to express that general region where all departed souls went to, and that the more modern Jews translated it by the term *Hades*, which they borrowed from the Greeks. Although they did not adopt the heathen fables on the subject, they believed, as many of the heathens did, that this place included different sorts of habitations, for ghosts of different characters, and though

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\* Dr. Campbell's 6th Diss.



they did not also receive the terms *Elysian fields*, and *Elysium*, as suitable appellations for the regions peopled by good spirits, they took instead of them, as better adapted to their own theology, the designations of *the garden of Eden*, *Paradise*, or *Abraham's bosom*. But, on the other hand, to express the unhappy situation of the wicked, in that intermediate state, they do not seem to have declined the use of the word *Tartarus*. The Apostle Peter says, of evil angels, that God cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. So it stands in the common versions, though neither *Gehenna* nor *Hades* are in the original. The word is *Tartarus*, which is, as it were, *the prison of Hades*, wherein criminals are kept till the general judgment. The whole of *Hades*, indeed, is a place where all the souls in it may be said to be more or less in strict custody, but from the *similitude of chains* being used in the Scriptures as applicable to those in *Tartarus*, we may infer that their confinement is much more severe to them—of a more stern and distressing nature than is exercised over the good. Both *Elysium* and *Tartarus* were comprehended by the Greeks under the name of *Hades*; and in like manner *Paradise* and *Tartarus* were so by the Jews, and they ought therefore, in our interpretations of Scripture, to be always so considered. There is, then, no inconsistency in maintaining that the rich man, though in torments, was not in *Gehenna*, (or the hell of final punishment,) but in that part of *Hades* called *Tartarus*, where the spirits of the impious are reserved for judgment and detained in darkness.\*

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\* The above is principally abridged from Dr. Campbell's Sixth Dissertation. It ought to be remarked, at the same time, that *raprapos* does not occur in the New Testament, but simply in 2 Pet. ii. 4, where *raprapous* will be found, being the participle of the verb *raprapow*, and seems to be equivalent to the Homeric expression *πυρρὸν εἰς ραπράπον*. This is, however, sufficient scriptural authority for naming one part of *Hades* *Tartarus*. That there is a region in the general place for human spirits, where they are miserable or unhappy, is indeed most fully established in Scripture by many passages, and a mere name to it, therefore, is of but little importance.

From the anxious appeal on the part of the rich man, we must infer his consciousness of the felicity of Lazarus, else he could not suppose him capable of rendering assistance ; and increased faculties or power of the understanding in a being capable of discerning Abraham and Lazarus at a great distance ; the power of reflection on the folly of his own past conduct, and the exercise of affection for his brethren that they might escape his mental agony of remorse and apprehension. On the part of Abraham,—the impassable gulf forms an obstacle to the relief prayed for ; thus seeming to admit the inference that although the miserable are, in the separate state, excluded from the kind offices of happier beings, yet that this may not be the case with the righteous themselves, over whom, we are told, God has given his angels charge.

If it be allowed that these were sources of anguish to the unhappy spirit, and that their exercise under different circumstances, might augment the felicity of the just, it surely will not be asserted that these additions of happiness are denied to the blessed spirits. Hence it is presumed that the powers of the soul are engaged on objects of affection still left behind on the earth, and derive pleasure from being so engaged ; and therefore, unless by some subsequent change, (which is quite inconceivable and unrevealed,) these powers may have been extinguished, there will be a continuance of their exercise, when the happy spirits shall be reunited in realms of bliss. There can be nothing improbable in this supposition, and there appears to be strong grounds for believing its reality ; for, if the spirit, in its separated state, be allowed to exercise purified affection towards the relations it has left behind, such as, when united to the body, would have been termed *social*, why may not the same principles *continue* in action, and form part of the happiness of the blest when reunited in the region of both souls and bodies after the judgment ? The soul of the rich man is represented as knowing that of Abraham, although he could not possibly have been acquainted with his appearance in this life, and if he did so *of himself*, (as James and John also seemed to know Moses and Elias at the transfiguration,) it would

not seem an improbable inference, from this intimation among the rest, that our souls have been in a prior state of conscious existence before they were placed in human bodies.\* Dives also readily recognized Lazarus in Hades, and with all the knowledge which his own individual experience gave him of the world of spirits after he was in it, he seemed to see nothing impossible in Lazarus being sent to the earth in order to speak to his brethren. Neither does Abraham say that it was impossible *in itself*, but merely that it would do them no good, and *this* he assigned as the cause of his refusal. We may infer, therefore, that the patriarch had there the power to have sent the ghost of Lazarus to the earth, and from the request of Dives, it would seem probable that he knew it would not have been an unexampled mission; not perhaps to the extent of visible appearance to the waking senses of men in every instance, or to make direct communications to the human race, but on some errand or other. The relief he asked from Abraham with regard to himself, was said to be *impossible*, not so was the reply as to the other.† We are even informed that human spirits

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\* To this it may be answered, that if such had been the case, we must have been sensible of it from recollecting something of our former state; but nothing is more easy and even natural than to believe from facts connected with the mental phenomena of man, that if it had been so, God has taken away all recollection of it. Many cases have been recorded of persons subject to periodical states of soundness of mind and derangement, who, on entering upon either of these, have forgotten entirely all that happened in the preceding state, but recollect every thing which had happened to them while formerly in the state which they then were under. In dreams, too, (during which, it may be said, we are in a different state or mode of existence than when awake,) the impression on our senses, although very strong and vivid at the time, even leading to bodily action, is ~~often~~ totally forgotten on our awaking, or then brought to remembrance by some casual occurrence. It is even a common thing to remember we had been dreaming, yet unable to recall any part of it, as when Nebuchadnezzar was troubled to know his dream, but the thing was gone from him.

† It may be said that these inferences are founded too literally on a parable, and taking what it relates as facts which had actually happened; whereas, all parables are in some degree metaphorical. But it is merely assuming that the general information it conveys is correct and true—and that the story

were actually sent from Hades to this world in several instances ; as when the ghost of Samuel came to prophesy to Saul ; the ghost or spirit of Moses on a mission relative to our Saviour's death ; and the souls of those whom the prophets and Christ restored to life. These last had most probably gone to the region of spirits on the death of their bodies, (one of which was corrupted before it was revived,) and it is not probable that they had remained on the earth, still less that they had never left their dead bodies.\* The souls likewise of those who arose out of their graves at the resurrection of our Lord and went into Jerusalem, must have been sent to the earth again by some power in Hades, if they were not brought by our Lord's spirit when it returned ; unless it can be supposed more likely that they were in the mean time roaming in this world, and near at hand, previous to their re-admission into bodies.

The Rev. Dr. Whitby tells us that it was a familiar phrase of the Jews to say on a just man's dying—"To-day shall he sit in the bosom of Abraham." If this had been an erroneous opinion, doubtless our Saviour would never have given the least countenance to it, much less would have plainly confirmed it by teaching the same thing as he did distinctly in this parable. It was a custom in those days, to recline on couches at meals, and one intimate friend sometimes leant on another after the repast, which familiarity was regarded as an evidence of particular friendship, favour, and protection ; and, in certain cases, of distinguished honour. A simile was taken from this custom merely implying that the one person referred to was in favour with the other, and, as the time when they so reposed was one in general free from care, and devoted to ease and quiet enjoyment, so

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proceeded upon what might have really occurred, as all the rest of our Lord's parables do.

\* And Elijah cried unto the Lord and said, O Lord, my God, I pray thee let this child's soul come into him again.—And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah : and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.—1 Kings xvii. 21, 22.

*Abraham's bosom* is merely expressive of being in the patriarch's company, and in evident favour with him, with a blissful repose from toil and pain ; but not of *sleep*, for Abraham heard and spoke.

## CHAPTER XI.

The nature of the Happiness and Misery to be expected in the Intermediate State.

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“What may be the state of the departed saints in the interval between their death and the final judgment, is a question upon which all are curious, because all are interested in it.”

BISHOP HORSLEY.

“There remaineth therefore *a rest* to the people of God.”—HEB. iv. 9.

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WHEN we think on those who are gone from us, and believe that their spirits are still conscious,—the warm feelings of love and friendship often prompt us to conjecture their present state, and to inquire what is revealed regarding separate spirits. Is it the same, whether, instead of the condition in which they are now, we only think of what they may be hereafter, when we shall have joined them? Is it all one, whether we have the most rational and scriptural ideas on the subject, or only wild and random notions of our own, formed without any particular investigation? Thoughts on the condition of the departed have frequently occupied the minds of the best men in all ages, but seldom are they properly founded on what the sacred writers have been allowed to reveal to us. I shall first give some *conjectures* on this subject, from Mr. Tickell’s poem on the death of the celebrated Addison:—

"In what new region to the just assign'd,  
 What new employments-please th' unbodied mind ?  
 A winged virtue, through th' etherial sky  
 From world to world unwearied does he fly ?  
 Or curlous, trace the long laborious maze  
 Of heaven's decrees, where wondering angels gaze ?  
 Does he delight to hear bold seraphs tell  
 How Michael battl'd, and the Dragon fell ?  
 Or mix'd with milder cherubim, to glow  
 In hymns of love ? "

This author had evidently no idea of Hades, or its states of rest and mental misery. He is quite at a loss whether to believe the soul flies uncontrolled through space, visiting the starry worlds, or enjoys the blessedness of heaven ; in active pleasure, or in a happy rest ;—in full possession of its reward, or only in expectation of it. In one respect, he speaks with correctness on the state of the dead—in not even imagining that their souls are sleeping insensibly, and he very properly considers the soul *as the man*, without adverting to the condition of the body, as many do—as if it were the man, or all that remained of him.

Sir Humphry Davy cherished similar ideas of disembodied spirits being allowed to roam among the stars and planets, and to investigate the secrets of nature. From being impressed with this notion, he had a dream on the subject, which he relates in his *Consolations in Travel*, as illustrative of his belief. His physician, Dr. Tobin, concludes an account of his death in these words :—"It became too evident that all that remained before me of this great philosopher was merely the cold and senseless frame with which he had worked. Its animating spirit had fled to its oft self-imagined planetary world, there to rejoin the rejoicing souls of the great and good of past ages, soaring from system to system, and with them still to do good in a higher and less bounded sphere, and I knew that it was freed from many a wearisome and painful toil."—Although

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\* Journal of a Tour, &c. whilst accompanying Sir H. Davy. By J. J. Tobin, M. D. 1832. Sir Humphry died at Geneva in May, 1829.

such conjectures may be founded on philosophic and sublime conceptions of the universe and of our future destiny,—although they may even not improbably be in some measure realized in due time, yet they are not consistent with scriptural intimations of the fate of separate souls during death, or until the resurrection of bodies, and therefore cannot be true. Revelation must be studied as well as astronomy, if we now wish to approach a knowledge of the reality of the state under discussion.

That the souls of men after death shall immediately enter into an intermediate state of comparative happiness or misery, (but both inferior in degree to those regions into which the judgment of the last day shall consign them,) the Scriptures so plainly affirm, as to leave no doubt of the fact. Indeed, if consciousness and memory are left to the soul while in its separate state, these *alone* would be sufficient to produce joy or sorrow, hope or fear, according as the life on earth had been. The subject has been already incidentally noticed in the preceding pages, but its importance deserves a separate inquiry.

Whenever the labours of this life are over, when our trials are at an end, and death shuts us out, in all probability, from the world we now move in, "*the rest*" which, we are informed, "remaineth for the people of God," is not one of insensibility, but of delightful repose, peace, and refreshment—a looking back with pleasure on the many cares which have been so agreeably terminated, and which promise to be greatly more so afterwards. "For he that is entered into his rest, he hath also ceased from his own works, *as God did from his*";\* which text, renders it clear what kind of *rest* it must be; one of pleasing satisfaction, as when we finish a long work which has cost us much care and pains. Could the rest promised as an initiatory or preliminary reward to the righteous be an insensible sleep in the grave, or any where else—what advantage would this be

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\* Heb. iv. 10.



to them? When a person dies, it is a common expression to say, *he is at his rest*; but very confused and contradictory notions generally prevail of the nature of this rest,—whether a conscious and pleasurable one, or that of inanimate matter. Instead of being in a state of rest, the souls of the wicked may be in continual agitation and inquietude,\* haunted by the terrors of an evil conscience, then reminding them of their wicked life on earth, and the certainty of a day of judgment, with future punishment in a more dismal region more vividly before their imagination; and all this without any trial at the bar of the Judge of all the human race, and consequently without any sentence or execution of that last and greatest of all punishments—being thrust into what is figuratively called the lake of fire. They are merely, while in the middle state, excluded from the promised rest of the good, while waiting for the judgment. “So I swear in my wrath they shall not enter into my rest.”† “And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not.”†

The opinion of Bishop Pearson, which he gives in his exposition of the 5th article of the Creed, entirely coincides with the belief here inculcated: “The soul of man,” he says, “in that separate state after death, must not be conceived to sleep, or be bereft and stript of all vital operations, but still to exercise the powers of understanding, and of willing, and to be subject to the affections of joy and sorrow. Upon which is grounded the different estate and condition of the souls of men during that time of separation; some of them being placed, by the mercy of God, in peace and rest, in joy and happiness, others, by the justice of the same God, left to sorrow, pains, and misery.”

All must admit, on consideration, that whatever be the pleasures and pains of the state of souls before they are reunited to bodies, those must be far inferior to what we shall

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\* See Isaiah lvii. 20, 21.

† Heb. iii. 11. 18.

experience when that event shall have taken place, and the sentence pronounced which shall fix our eternal doom ; and I have sufficiently proved that the joys of heaven and the torments of hell do not commence until the day of the Lord, which is yet hid in futurity, and its approach shall be *preceded* by signs and wonders, none of which have yet appeared.

Dr. Burnet, after showing that we are not to expect to enter into heaven immediately on death, adds—"Let us be contented in that middle world, if I may have leave to call it so, with far less enjoyments ; yet, let us not think it a small thing, that the soul being conscious to itself of its immortality, and breathing forth nothing but love divine, should acquiesce in God ; and itself having, at the same time, a joyful and lively hope of the coming of Christ, and the glory which it is to partake with him."\*

Concerning the *particulars* of that happiness or misery which will be assigned to us in the intermediate state of spirits, the Scriptures leave us in ignorance, but they inform us generally in metaphoric language, that they will be great, though inferior to what is to follow. Dr. Campbell remarks that—"In the Old Testament, the most profound silence is observed, in regard to the state of the deceased, their joys or sorrows, happiness or misery. It is represented to us rather by negative qualities than by positive ; by its silence, its darkness,† its being inaccessible, unless by preternatural means, to the living, and their ignorance about it. This much, in general, seems always to have been presumed concerning it, that it is not a state of activity adapted for any exertion, or indeed for the accomplishment of any important purpose, good or bad,"‡—further than confinement in one general place of all souls until the day of their trial.

Confinement may imply very different treatment, accord-

\* *De Statu Mortuorum.* Translated in the text.

† Or more literally,—by its invisibility.

‡ Dr. Campbell's 6th Diss.

ing to circumstances. Man is confined to this earth, so that he cannot leave it as long as he continues a man, and yet he has the whole range of it. Paradise must be a vastly greater region than what we now inhabit ; the souls in it may be sensible that as disembodied spirits they could be no where so well, and therefore may have no wish while in such a separate state of being to leave it even were they permitted ; but they may nevertheless be anxious to become “ children of the resurrection,” that they may be able to enjoy some species of bodily pleasures as well as spiritual—and with body and soul to enter into heaven. In the other region of Hades, (by whatever name it be called, for this is immaterial,) simple confinement would assume quite a different nature and aspect, in the same way as it would do to us in earthly countries of a desolate description. Were two persons here, while awaiting trial, to be confined, the one, for instance, to Britain, and the other to Siberia, we need not doubt that their feelings would be different, even before their doom had been pronounced, as to an eternal and far greater happiness or misery.

Those accused of offences here against their fellow-men, are often *classed*, and their confinement made light or heavy according to the crimes of which they are accused or suspected, some being prevented from escaping by heavy manacles in dungeons, or closely kept within narrow bounds ; others are allowed a greater range in less dismal or even in pleasant places, while a few are what is termed prisoners at large, or the restraints on them mostly nominal. Before trial, the consciences of these men, if not wholly seared and callous to every impression, will alone be sufficient to render their situation one of comparative happiness or misery. When at liberty, and nothing but the things of this world before their eyes, the guilty might hope to escape punishment ; but when confined for the purpose of being tried, and all worldly things removed for ever from around them, this hope and delusion is at an end, for they must then be certain that their all-seeing Judge must be able to discover the truth, and the terrors of the judgment will rise up with fear-

ful and foreboding threatenings in their imaginations, which must cause misery beyond description from the moment of their confinement. The innocent man, on the contrary, or he who hopes for forgiveness, rests his confidence on One whom he believed and trusted to even in this world, and while he was in a state of probation. He is sure either that his innocence will be made manifest and rewarded, or that his faith will be counted to him for righteousness, by Him who is faithful to his promise. The sinners who have repented *while on earth*, and whose repentance they hope will be accepted of, will anticipate a joyful acquittal;—more especially will their gladness be increased if they have not only a hope of forgiveness, but a prospect of still greater happiness (after their trial) than they ever had a distinct conception of while in this life.

Bishop Campbell observes that—"When a judge here on earth, orders a man into custody, to wait until he be tried in due form, this is not called *a sentence*, nor is it always a great hardship, for some confinements have been made very agreeable, and the person confined has generally more or less liberty allowed him, according as the opinion may be of his guilt, or according to the nature of what is brought against him. Now, when thus it is amongst us frail mortals, it is easy to conceive that the Almighty doth appoint *a proper place* for departed souls to reside in, according to what he knows their deeds call for, and according to the sentence which he is likewise aware shall be pronounced after the reunion of their souls and bodies. Now this place of *custody*, where the departed souls are kept, is what I call *the middle state*." \*

The happiness in the region of separate souls and that of heaven are often, and indeed generally, confounded by those who do not attend to the distinction made between them in Scripture. A separate soul, and one clothed with a material body, must be, at least, in very different capacities for

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\* Primitive doctrines restored, by the Honourable and Right Rev. Bishop Campbell, (of the Scottish Episcopal Church.) 1721. Fol.

feeling either joy or sorrow. In Hades the pleasures probably result partly from all trials, such as we experience in the body, being past, and partly from contemplating, with the eye of eager hope, the anticipated pleasures of heaven, of which we shall then have a clearer idea. Our understanding may then be vastly enlarged, nay, *certainly* will be so, and consequently the prospect of the delights of heaven may be more conducive to the happiness of those separate souls who expect them, than mortals can imagine with their present limited natures.

The following observations by Mr. Muston are intended by him to apply to the future state generally, without distinguishing that which is to follow death and until the resurrection, from eternity which comes after the judgment of the great day, but the arguments will be found strictly applicable in regard to the state of the soul on which it immediately enters upon its leaving the body after the present life is over.

“The soul will be the same intelligent substance that it ever was during any period of its sublunary existence, and in a world where we may expect to find the most varied forms of intellectual and moral beauty, may even retain many of its original marks of distinction throughout the successive ages of eternity. There is no truth, indeed, which admits of more vivid demonstration than that the consciousness of man, or what amounts to the same thing, the memory of his present existence and actions, will be extended into another world. It is a doctrine which rests upon principles, which lie at the foundation of revealed truth, and which stands connected with all the sublime purposes of God in the economy of redemption.”—“Whatever changes or losses the human soul may experience after death, *it will not part with the remembrance of those actions and relations for which it is responsible to God, and which are to determine the awards of the great day. For it is this which constitutes personal identity.*” \*—“All the ends of justice require that

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\* This, it will be observed, distinctly relates to the whole time between death and the great day.

those parts of his conduct which are rewarded or punished should be brought home to his conscience, and that he should, therefore, have a distinct recollection of his actions, and of the responsibility connected with them. If in a future world we have no remembrance of the events connected with our earthly being—if the actions we have performed, the scenes through which we have passed, and the persons associated with us, should be for ever buried in oblivion; if, in a word, there should be no such thing as the retrospection of our antecedent existence, it is manifest that such a state of things would amount, virtually, to an annihilation of our individuality, and would, of necessity, frustrate the purposes of penal justice and redeeming love.”\*

The scenes which must meet the astonished view of the soul, on its first entrance into the middle state, must, to the good, at once compensate for the earthly sufferings they have passed through, and which their joyful rest there will soon make them forget, as repose after toil quickly effaces its remembrance.

The happiness which the Elect shall afterwards experience in *heaven*, will certainly be of a much more *active* nature than the rest and peace promised to them in *Hades* would indicate.

Many metaphorical expressions are used in Scripture regarding the present state of the saints departed,—as that they are clad in white garments, which are emblematical of purity;†—wearing flowers on their heads, and playing up-

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\* Recognition in the world to come.

† In the East it is usual to present garments to persons as marks of favour, honour, and protection, and particular sentiments are meant to be understood according to the nature of the present. Among the Jews, white robes or veils were worn as symbolic of innocence, and on occasions of solemn worship. The white dresses said to be given to the disembodied souls in paradise, must have been spoken of, therefore, merely in reference to these customs, and could mean no more than what was indicated by such symbols or dresses of honour upon earth; the similitude must have been well understood by the Jews at the time.

Vide Josephus de Bell. Jud. lib. II. cap. 1. sect. 1.—chap. viii. sect. 3. 5. 7.

on harps ; but it ought not to be inferred, at least from such passages, that white robes, flowers, and harps, are to be seen either in Hades or in heaven, any more than that our Saviour will assume the actual form of a Lamb, or that the typical figures and metaphors in the Revelation of St. John will be embodied literally as they are described. The meanings, indeed, of many of these are explained in the text, and shown to be merely emblematic representations of what they were intended to convey. In the first chapter of this mysterious Book, it is intimated that the seven stars represented the angels of the seven churches,\* and the seven candlesticks are these churches. The great red dragon having seven crowned heads and ten horns, is explained in the same chapter where it is spoken of, to refer to the devil.† His tail is figured to have swept the third part of the stars of heaven down to the earth ; but any one who thinks these and such like passages are to be taken literally, must know very little either of the stars, or of the earth, or of Scripture : a similar expression of our Saviour's, regarding the last day, has been frequently understood as strictly literal, and in a splendid painting by Martin of the opening of the Sixth Seal, the stars are to be seen falling to the earth, as some firmly believe shall be the case, with just as much reason as to probability or even possibility, as if the whole mountains of the earth should be expected to fall upon an orange !—a subject to which I shall have occasion to recur. The word of God is beautifully likened to a *seed*, but no one supposes that it has any real relation to such a thing, yet many are

\* The original more properly signifies the presiding Bishops or Heads of these churches—not spiritual Beings of the nature of angels. The context itself indicates this.

† The same appellation was also in use to be applied to his agents and instruments on earth. The kings and people of Egypt who were the great persecutors of the primitive church of Israel, are distinguished by this title in several places of the Old Testament, Ps. lxxiv. 13.—Is. li. 9.—Ezek. xxix. 3. In the passage above referred to, (Rev. xii.) the dragon is clearly shown, by Bishop Newton, to allude to Rome.

See this Prelate's Dissertation on the Prophecies.

apt to understand texts in Scripture as literally descriptive of realities which are only of a like nature with these similes.

If, as it is probable they must, many of the pleasures as well as pains which we shall feel hereafter, be of a quite different kind from what we knew at present, it then follows, that even if we should have a *general* idea of these, any *minute* description of the reality would be nearly incomprehensible to us here, unless additional intelligence was given to us for understanding it. This, however, need not have precluded some faint ideas being conveyed to us in language and by metaphor suited to our comprehensions, and such have been communicated.

It must surely be a great accession to the happiness of the good in the middle state, to be *actually* delivered from the fearful anticipations of death, or that its dread and bitterness to the soul is past. The pains and mortal agony of the soul in sympathy with the fate of the body will be over, and although the latter will still be under the influence of the fatal doom, and is insensible, yet the intelligent and thinking faculty has no reason to dread the gloomy prospect of the state of death any more. The soul is no longer exposed to that conflict with the flesh, which formed the hardest part of its former warfare: it is free from those tumultuous passions which disturbed its peace: it is free from having communicated to it that pain and anguish to which our flesh is heir. We shall then be removed from all the din and bustle of the world, from all the weary exertions to sustain life in ourselves and in those dependent on us,—from jealousies, rivalries, misfortunes, and sorrow from the loss of dear friends. These cares and fears at present often hinder our minds from contemplating our eternal welfare, by distracting our attention, and the sorrowful recollections of the past, or anticipations of the future, at times in this world, often break in upon our happiest hours.

In a middle state we must have far clearer views of heavenly pleasures than it is possible to attain here, and the anticipations of them shall consequently be so much the



more delightful: we shall have the unutterable happiness of rejoining those who had gone before us, and become acquainted with the great characters of whom now we can only read. Although we shall not consider our residence with them in Hades as eternal, yet we may anticipate the change remaining to be experienced as one of still greater happiness,—a transition to a more perfect state of enjoyment, not of separation, for we shall then hope to go altogether.

Here, men may contrive to keep out of sight the future consequences of their vicious conduct: they may immerse themselves with such eagerness and constant occupation in business, or in pleasure, or even in a sort of dreaming indolence; as to leave no time for serious reflection; their consciences may forbear to alarm them from such warnings having been long disregarded, and they may possibly contrive to persuade themselves that the day of judgment is so far removed, that it may never come at all; or at any rate, that with an event which may be delayed for thousands of years, they have but little present concern. But there,—in the now unseen world, all those intervening objects which once occupied the mind and served to shut out the prospect of an unwelcome futurity, will have no place, and the disembodied spirit of the man devoted to this life alone, will be wretched in the privation of its past enjoyments,—will have its wretchedness augmented in the clear and constant apprehension of its approaching doom. The great of the earth, the proud, the rich, and the powerful, will then find themselves suddenly and for ever sunk from their high estate, if they have neglected the one thing needful; while they shall see the poor, the lowly, and those who, when alive on earth, diligently endeavoured to prepare themselves for heaven, as servants of God, raised far above them, and happy. They will remember, with unavailing sorrow, how they despised and looked down upon all such, and will then find the unsubstantial vanity of riches, bitterly regretting that they had laid up none of their worldly substance where moth and rust do not corrupt, and where then they might

be benefited by it. Their whole pursuits on which alone they were used to depend for happiness will be gone; never again to be enjoyed; the reflection, ~~that~~ by <sup>their</sup> different conduct they too might have received the favour of heaven, will contribute to render them doubly miserable. While the good are anticipating far greater capacity for happiness by the reunion of their souls with bodies, and also a change of place which will afford them increased opportunities of delightful employments—the bad must, on the contrary, view their next change of state only as introducing them to new torment, adding *bodily* to *mental* pain. These thoughts, and the anticipated consequences of the judgment, without a trial or condemnation by a special sentence, will account for separate souls suffering torment in Hades; and such effects of their by-past lives cannot be viewed in the light of punishments inflicted on them, more than a man's own conscience is on earth from the moment that sin has been committed. In the disembodied state, however, there can be no doubt that conscience will exercise far more power, and will be more attended to, than often occurs here on earth, where dissipation and worldly employments contribute to make us indifferent to its remonstrances.

“That there is, in a lower degree, a reward for the righteous, and a punishment of the wicked in the state intervening between death and the resurrection, is no more repugnant to the divine perfections” (in Dr. Campbell's opinion) “than that there should be (as in the course of Providence there often are) manifest recompences of eminent virtues, and of enormous crimes, in the present world. Add to this, that Josephus, in the account he gives of the opinions of the Pharisees, or those Jews who believed in a future state, mentions expressly the rewards of the virtuous, and the punishments of the vicious in Hades.”

It is not, however, so proper or natural to view these as of the nature of direct rewards or punishments, farther than as what must arise from remembrances, from hopes and fears; for otherwise it would not be altogether consistent with our trial and sentence being delayed till the last day,

to believe that we should be previously rewarded or punished. The *flames* with which the soul of Dives was said to be tormented, are held by the Roman Church, and by some other Christians, as really some kind of fire, although they admit that they cannot comprehend how flames can have any such effect upon *spirits*, which they could neither *consume* nor even *scorch*. It should also be considered, that in common language, we still speak of being tormented with *the flames* of love, of patriotism; and of *burning* with revenge; of being *consumed* by hate, care, &c. without intending to refer to any real burning or visible flames whatever. As to whether there shall be actual flames in the lake of fire, as the Scripture sometimes terms the hell of eternal punishment, this is quite a different inquiry; but it will be remembered that *its* inmates are to have *material*, though immortal bodies. Whatever terms may be applied to the pains or pleasures in the middle state, it is perfectly clear, that they cannot be called *the* punishments or rewards which are to be distributed in the eternal state after the day of judgment.

The entrance of souls into the middle states, and the assigning to each its place there, is but a private affair, in comparison with that of the public retributions of vice and virtue, which will be exhibited before all who have ever lived in the world when the last day bursts upon us. *Then* will be awarded those punishments and rewards denounced and promised, and we shall receive them in both parts of our nature at the same time. Since this last state belongs to the body as well as the soul, it is very properly set before us now as more prominent than the other, and more capable therefore of making an impression on us than the notion of mere spiritual things, from whatever resulting.

## CHAPTER XII.

An Inquiry into the probable employments and sources of pleasure in our future states of being; but principally in reference to the expected joys of that heaven, into which the redeemed of God shall ascend after the resurrection and judgment, to remain there for ever.

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“O Nature ! all sufficient ! over all !  
Enrich me with a knowledge of thy works.  
Snatch me to heaven ; and show thy wonders there,  
World beyond world, in infinite extent,  
Profusely scatter'd o'er the blue immense.”—THOMSON.

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“What if earth  
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein  
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought ?”

Par. Lost. Book V. l. 574.

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It is not absolutely *necessary* for us to be acquainted, while in this world, with the real nature of the pleasures which the blessed shall enjoy in heaven, but it may nevertheless be of very great consequence to have more just and true notions of the heavenly state and its pleasures, than what are generally entertained ; especially as they are believed by many to be at direct variance with all our present notions of happiness, for no pleasure of any kind which we know of on earth would continue so, if never varying, and uninterruptedly pursued for ever. It may not be *necessary* to have any previous knowledge of a distant land in which we are at a future time to reside, but there are few who would not be ex-

tremely anxious to learn, before-hand, all that they could discover relative to it. It is not *necessary* that we should be aware how we shall spend the next year of our life on earth, if we shall live so long, but it would be esteemed by all most interesting information. How then can it be said, as it has been urged against this inquiry as to heavenly joys and employments, that the manner in which we shall be there made happy, is at present of no moment, because it is not also *necessary*? The investigation is very far from useless or unprofitable, for its result may establish in our minds more correct ideas,—may inspire us with a more ardent devotion,—a more anxious endeavour to obtain what we may be led to anticipate.\* We shall be following the advice given us to set our affections on things above, more than on those of this world, and it would indeed be a strange interpretation of this advice, to understand it to mean, that we should be careless of what those pleasures and rewards are to consist in until they be experienced.

Let us then endeavour to contemplate for a while the scenes beyond the resurrection—beyond the disembodied state—and gaze in idea into the bright regions of eternal day, which we hope then to enter;—where, not only free from care, but in possession of unalloyed pleasure, and engaged in delightful and sublime employments, we shall forget our transient cares in this world. Let us try if we—

“Can look to heaven with more than mortal eyes,  
 Bid the free soul expatiate in the skies;  
 Amid her kindred stars familiar roam,  
 Survey the region, and confess her home——”

Nothing can be more vague and undefined than the ideas commonly imagined of the *heaven* where we are to enjoy our eternal reward, and although it was written before the

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\* The London newspapers lately reported the examination of an infidel butcher, at one of the courts of justice there; who, in reference to the Christian heaven, declared he had no wish to go to such a place, as he understood its happiness only to consist in sitting or standing on clouds and singing psalms for ever! Some devout Christians have scarce more extended ideas of heavenly delights.

time of our Saviour—that eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive the happiness prepared for those who love him—yet the gradually increasing knowledge which the great Author of nature is pleased to be continually bestowing upon us, may not, in our enlightened days, render these words so applicable as they once were, when men knew little or nothing of the true system of the visible universe, and when philosophy cared little for inquiring into the natural appearances around us. St. Paul tells us, too, that the Holy Spirit had revealed to the Apostles the things prepared for the blest,\* and therefore the great ignorance regarding them which he alludes to, as *previously* existing, did not extend beyond his time, but what he speaks of as being “written,” is sometimes still quoted to show that man can know nothing about them.

It must be admitted that we can only conjecture on many things relative to heaven; at the same time that, founding strictly upon revealed truths, and, in further illustration, calling to our aid those sublime discoveries which modern learning has traced out and observed among the works of God, we may perhaps be enabled to form more reasonable conjectures than even some of the learned might at first be disposed to allow could be done; and far beyond what would ever enter into the imaginations of the vulgar. *The reality* will unquestionably greatly exceed what we can at present conceive, but more can be fairly deduced from direct revelation in the sacred writings than is commonly supposed.

In Mr. Dick's *Philosophy of a Future State*, he observes: “We are assured that the foundation of this felicity to be enjoyed in that world, rests on the absence of every evil, and the attainment of every perfection—that the principle of depravity must be destroyed, and the affections purified and refined before we can enjoy ‘the inheritance of the saints in light.’ These are principles which are clearly exhibited in the Scriptures, which are accordant to the dic-

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\* 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.

tates of sound reason, and which are generally recognised by the various divisions of the religious world. But the greater part of Christians rest contented with the most vague and incorrect ideas of the felicity of heaven, and talk and write about it in so loose and figurative a manner, as can convey no rational or definite conception of the sublime contemplations and employments of celestial intelligences. Instead of eliciting from the metaphorical language of Scripture the *ideas* intended to be conveyed, they endeavour to ramify and expand the figures employed by the sacred writers still farther, heaping metaphor upon metaphor, and epithet upon epithet, and blending a number of discordant ideas, till the image or picture presented to the mind assumes the semblance of a splendid chaotic mass, or of a dazzling but undefined meteor. The term *glory*, and its kindred epithets, have been reiterated a thousand times in descriptions of the heavenly state; the redeemed have been represented as assembled in one vast crowd above the middle concave of the sky, adorned with 'starry crowns,' drinking at 'crystal fountains,' and making 'the vault of heaven ring with their loud acclamations.'

"The Redeemer himself has been exhibited as suspended like a statue in the heavens above this immense crowd, crowned with diadems, and encircled with a refulgent splendour, while the assembly of the heavenly inhabitants were *incessantly* gazing on this object, like a crowd of spectators gazing at the motion of an air balloon, or a splendid meteor.\* Such representations are repugnant to the ideas intended to be conveyed by the metaphorical language of inspiration, when stripped of its drapery. They can convey but a meagre and distorted conception of the employments of the celestial state, and tend only to bewilder the imagination, and to 'darken counsel by words without knowledge.'

"Hence it has happened that certain infidel scoffers have been led to conclude, that the Christian heaven is not an

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\* However true, generally speaking, this may be, the passage is not quoted here in approval of such similes as applied to so sacred a Person.

object to be desired ; and have frequently declared, ‘ that they could feel no pleasure in being suspended for ever in an ethereal region, and perpetually singing psalms and hymns to the Eternal,’—an idea of heaven which is too frequently conveyed by the vague and distorted descriptions which have been given of the exercises and entertainments of the future world.”\*

Mr. Dick’s conjectures as to what shall be our employments in our eternal state are founded (with great scientific learning) on the Scriptures ; and (as we find them detailed at considerable length in the work quoted above) are in general, natural inferences from passages in that great source of knowledge. To those who wish to consider this topic, without any of those unmeaning rhapsodies which only mystify the subject, the sources of happiness in heaven, as imagined by Mr. Dick, must be allowed in many particulars to be very *probable* ; but beyond probability we cannot go, if we descend to the *minutiæ* of the expected delights. Mr. D. speaks too confidently on some points, but pursues the subject in a very different manner from some who appear to think that neither theological nor scientific knowledge is at all necessary to curb their own wild imaginations.

In Mr. Montgomery’s poem on *The Omnipresence of the Deity*, the spirits of the just are described as delighting to “bathe in streams of everlasting light,” and he says, with regard to heavenly joys :—

“There shall we muse amid the starry glow,†  
Or hear the fiery streams of glory flow ;  
Or on the living cars of light’ning driven,  
Triumphant wheel around the plains of heaven !”

Such descriptions can only be regarded as direct nonsense ; conveying none but the most absurd notions, evidently proceeding from one who can himself have no definite ideas of what he means to convey.

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\* The Philosophy of a Future State, pp. 271—3.

† In another place, the poet supposes all the stars shall be destroyed at the last day of our earth in its present state, but here he appears to conclude that they shall remain.



We smile with pity on the earthly ideas of pleasure which Mahometans are said in general to expect in paradise or heaven (which in their belief are names of the same place) suggesting the observation that

“The Moslem’s heaven is easily made,  
’Tis but black eyes and lemonade!”\*

But we should at the same time, take care that we do not run into the opposite extreme, and needlessly and unauthorisedly render it too uninviting to mortal comprehensions, by describing its enjoyments as entirely spiritual and by such absurd imaginations as have been referred to; as if heaven was only to be inhabited by souls and not by material bodies, as we read, are to be raised for us;—which, although purified and rendered infinitely more perfect, yet must certainly be capable of enjoying pleasure of some kind, as well as the soul shall do its mental delights. Flesh and blood, constituted as they are at present, shall not enter heaven, but it would be a contracted way of thinking, indeed, to suppose that our glorified bodies should not partake, along with the spirit, of heavenly pleasures. The spiritual Being who showed St. John what shall be hereafter, said—“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna,”†—referring to what was to be done in a future life. Now, the visible manna was that “*bread from heaven*” which God promised and gave to the Israelites. It

\* Mahomet has been reproached for proposing no other happiness in heaven than sensual and carnal; but this is not the case. The Koran says—“The height of happiness will consist in seeing God face to face; that this pleasure will be the greatest, and make us forget all the other pleasures of Paradise.” All Mahometans do not admit of carnal pleasures in heaven. “All those sensual descriptions of Mahomet,” says a learned author, “are merely allegorical, and looked upon as such by the most rational Mahometans,”—holding “that Paradise could not be compared to any thing in this world, but is such a place as the eye has not seen, the ear has not heard, and the likeness of which has never entered into the thoughts of man.”

Picart’s Explanation of the Mahometan Rel. Vol. VI, p. 90.—  
See also Herbelot Biblioth. Orient.—Porock’s Miscell. Notes.

† Rev. ii. 17.

was a material, bodily substance, pleasant to the taste, which they likened to a small cake usually eaten with honey, but so wholly different in its substance from any thing they had ever seen, that they called it *Manna*; literally signifying, *what is it*? Now, why may not the unseen manna, or heavenly bread, be as substantial as that which was visible, eaten, and nourished the body? It *may* have been intended to be metaphoric in the text just quoted from Revelation, and what we would call *food for the mind*, but of this we are by no means sure, and it may just as probably have meant a species of food for the body,—some fruit, perhaps, of the tree of life, which shall continue immortality in the glorified body in heaven, or contribute to its pleasure. In the Psalms it is called “*the corn of heaven*,” or “*angels’ food*,”\*—now, if all this is merely emblematical, of what can it be emblematic or metaphoric, but of some kind of food or sustenance for heavenly beings? Our Saviour spoke of drinking the juice of the vine new in his Father’s kingdom, and he partook of food with his disciples after his resurrection. We are never to hunger or thirst in heaven as we do here, but it is not said that we are never to eat and drink there, and the *idea* at least of *nectar* and *ambrosia* may not be altogether without *some* foundation.

The Editor of *The Scottish Episcopal Magazine and Review*, in answer to a query upon the subject, thus expresses his belief regarding the pleasures of heaven:—“It seems, from the mode in which many pious persons have expressed their meaning, to be their opinion, that the employment and happiness of the saints in light will have in them nothing similar or even analogous to any employment or happiness on earth. But if this be really the case, how is it possible, that by any conduct whatever on earth, we can be rendered meet to be partakers of the inheritance of those saints? There will indeed be in heaven no *sensual* enjoyments; nor any of that labour which is necessary to procure such en-

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\* Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25.

joyments on earth ; ‘ for they who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage : Neither can they die any more : for they are equal unto the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection,’ \* but *sensual* enjoyments are not the purest nor the most exquisite enjoyments even on earth. The pleasures derived through the eye and the ear are, indeed, much more refined than those which we enjoy by means of the three other senses. When we look at any beautiful object, or listen to the sweet sounds of music, we are sensible of no corporeal impression made on the eye or on the ear ; but the case is very different with respect to the senses of touch, taste, and smell. The pleasures of the eye and the ear, therefore, are never, we believe, classed among *sensual* pleasures ; and as our souls are to be clothed with glorified bodies in heaven, we may there enjoy, as the Scriptures seem to declare we shall enjoy, all the pleasures that can arise from the perception of beauty and harmony. But how superior even to these are the enjoyments of intellect, and how much more desirable. There is no pleasure which is conveyed to us through the medium of the senses of touch, taste, and smell, that doth not soon cloy even to the sensualist ; but who that ever set himself to inquire into the word and works of God, was cloyed by the pleasures which he experienced from the enlargement of his faculties and the increase of his knowledge ? ” †

Many of the descriptions of the invisible world in Holy Writ, are accommodated to the imperfection of our nature, and to the capacity of our finite understandings. For instance, we find the kingdom of heaven and the joys of the blessed metaphorically represented under the figure of sumptuous banquets, †—of marriage feasts,—of pleasant pastures,

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\* Luke xx. 35, 36. This text, (as do many others,) clearly shows that if man is to be admitted into heaven only as a child of the resurrection, no one can be so, therefore, until the resurrection of his body—the event alluded to.

† Vol. II. p. 311.

† To say that we neither hunger nor thirst in heaven, no more indicates

—of royal cities,—of thrones, and all the ensigns of honour and majesty peculiar to princes upon earth ; and yet we are sufficiently cautioned against taking some of these expressions in their most obvious and literal acceptation when we are told, that “ the children of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage.” At the same time, as before observed, we must not, as of course, understand, that although we shall not experience the pains and miseries here arising from hunger and thirst, that our heavenly bodies are not to feel pleasure from being gratified with “ angels’ food,”—some kind of real material sustenance profusely within reach of all. With regard to the world to come, although we may as yet speak and think as children do of what relates to manhood, and although it is not possible as yet to know but *in part*, still our faculties are always advancing in knowledge by cultivation, and we can avail ourselves of the *accumulated* wisdom of ages. Even our understanding of Scripture is improving by the grace which God bestows on the labours of those who investigate it, while the divine and the philosopher often mutually assist each other.

The celebrated astronomical discourses of Dr. Chalmers, Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, have excited much attention, and greatly contributed to establish more rational ideas in regard to heaven than used to be entertained. Both Dr. C. and Mr. Dick appear to have directed their inquiries, in an especial manner, to this most important subject. Revelation has been by these and other writers much elucidated, but neither of the two just mentioned makes any endeavour to distinguish that heaven of which they speak, from the paradise of the middle state, which leads them into inconsistencies, and sometimes what

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that there shall be no eating nor drinking there, than it would be to infer that the rich here on earth do not take food, because it may be truly said of them, that they are never hungry nor thirsty, at least not painfully so, which seems to be the hunger referred to by the scriptural expression, for the hunger that merely gives us an appetite or relish for our food is more a pleasing and welcome sensation than otherwise.

they say must relate to the one, and sometimes to the other, without any distinction.

“While we attempt not,” says Dr. Chalmers, “to be wise *above* that which is written, we should attempt, and that most studiously, *to be wise up to that which is written*. The disclosures are very few and very partial, which are given to us of that bright and beautiful economy which is to survive the ruins of our present one. But still there are such disclosures—and on the principle of the things that are revealed belonging unto us, we have a right to walk up and down, for the purpose of observation, over the whole extent of them. What is made known of the details of immortality, is but small in the amount, nor are we furnished with the materials of any thing like a graphical or picturesque exhibition of its abodes of blessedness. But still something is made known, and which, too, may be addressed to a higher principle than curiosity, being, like every other Scripture, ‘profitable both for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.’—\*

“It is not indeed expressly asserted, but seems rather to be supposed and implied, in the expressions and thoughts of most persons on this subject, that the heavenly life will be one of *inactivity* and perfectly *stationary*;—that there will be nothing to be *done*,—nothing to be *learnt*,—no *advances* to be made;—nothing to be hoped for,—nothing to *look forward* to, except a continuance in the very state in which the blessed will be placed at once. Now this is far from being an alluring view to minds constituted as ours are. It is impossible for us to contemplate such a state,—even with the most perfect assent of the understanding to the assertion, that it will be exquisitely happy;—still, I say, it is impossible for such minds as ours to contemplate such a state, without an idea of tediousness and weariness forcing itself upon them. The ideas of *change*, *hope*, *progress*,—*improvement*, *acquirement*, *action*,—are so intimately connected with our conceptions of happiness, so interwoven with

the very thought of all enjoyment,—that it is next to impossible for us to separate them.”\*

Change, progress, action, and enjoyment, are all natural and rational ideas of what we shall find in heaven during our eternal state, but we cannot, therefore, easily enter into the belief of its being a place of “*rest*,” which *A Country Pastor* says we are assured it is : “that is, of—rest from all toilsome and painful exertions.”† We understand very well what it is to rest from exertion, which certainly does not mean that we are to enter upon activity of any sort. Not that in heaven our exertions will lead to pain or to the weariness proceeding from toilsome labour in this world, but we have no reason to think that we shall have nothing to do,—no active employment there; for it is in *Hades* that we shall find our rest from earthly troubles, not in heaven. The welcome and grateful rest in *Hades* will refresh our wearied minds, and the *activity* of our immortal lives in heaven shall still more show us that earthly toils and pains are not then worthy of being thought on. When our Saviour referred to the nature of this rest in the *next* world, he took a simile from the state of ease felt by men after dinner or supper, when in ancient times they lay on sofas around the table—the pleasurable state we feel when *over our wine*, (to use a common expression,) which was the principal time the ancients devoted to social conversation after the fatigues of the day, being quite different from the rest we derive from sleep, or the silent repose of the Spanish *siesta*, in which they indulge during the heat of the day.‡

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\* Sermons preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow, by Thos. Chalmers, D. D. Sermon vii.

† Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State. p. 238.

‡ Although when in heaven we shall have completely recovered from the weariness of our earthly labours and trials, yet we cannot be said *to rest* from them, if we are there in a state of active employment,—if the charge, for instance, of one or more stars is committed to us,—which is perhaps figured by our Lord in the parable of the talents as our having dominion over so many cities. We shall have an eternal cessation in heaven from any thing wearisome either to body or mind, but shall have no need for rest or slumber to recruit us.

The author of *Natural History of Enthusiasm*, (at present a much esteemed work,) makes some judicious remarks on the common misunderstanding of the language of Scripture which would lead us to consider the highest *heaven* as a state of rest, but he does not explain how this has arisen—by extending to our final place of reward the rest promised only in the middle state, and making no distinction between them. With the one, this inactivity is in strict accordance with the scriptural descriptions of the nature of Hades, but is incompatible with what we are told of heaven;—so it must remain to be enjoyed, (as indeed we should naturally expect,) immediately after the termination of our earthly pilgrimage, and its attendant weariness.

“Heaven”—(says the anonymous author referred to) “the ultimate and perfected condition of human nature, is thought of amidst the toils of life, as an elysium of *quiescent* bliss, exempt, if not from action, at least from the necessity of action. Meanwhile every one feels that the ruling tendency and the uniform intention of all the arrangements of the present state, and of almost all its casualties, is to generate and to cherish habits of strenuous exertion.”—“The whole order of nature, and all the institutions of society, and the ordinary course of events, and the explicit will of God, declared in His word, concur in opposing that propensity to rest which belongs to the human mind.”—“Here then is visible a great and serious incongruity between matter of fact and the common ideas of the future state; it deserves inquiry, therefore, whether these anticipations are really founded on the evidence of Scripture.”—“It may be observed, in passing, that those glimpses of the supernal world which we catch in the Scriptures, have in them, certainly, quite as much of history as of poetry, and impart the idea—not that there is less of business in heaven than on earth, but more. Unquestionably the felicity of those beings of a higher order, to whose agency frequent allusions are made by the inspired writers, is not incompatible with the assiduities of a strenuous ministry to be discharged, ac-

according to the best ability of each.”\*—“Scripture does not affirm or imply that the plenitude of divine power is at all in more immediate exercise in the higher world than in this : on the contrary, the revelation so distinctly made of a countless array of intelligent and vigorous agents, designated usually by an epithet of martial signification, precludes such an idea.”—“But if there be a real and necessary, not merely a shadowy agency in heaven as well as on earth ; and if human nature is destined to act its part in such an economy, then its constitution and the severe training it undergoes, are at once explained.”†

Although God sometimes directly communicated with man, yet it was often by the agency of spiritual beings, who were sent to execute his will from some distant part of space : or prophets were commissioned on similar errands. To suppose that we shall be entirely idle in heaven, or only occupied in praising God, is contrary to Revelation, and we are even told that the Persons of the Godhead are always employed, as before pointed out from Scripture.

In Dr. Watts’ sermon on the happiness of *separate* spirits, he sometimes alludes to their present state of disunion from bodies, and at other times, to the period when they shall be reunited to bodies in heaven, preserving no distinction. His anticipations of the pleasures of heaven are, in general, agreeable to those of the ablest interpreters of the sacred volume.

“Let the worship of the glorified spirits,” he says, “be ever so various, yet I cannot persuade myself that mere direct acts or exercises of what we properly call worship, are their only and everlasting work. The Scriptures tell us, there are certain seasons when the angels, those ‘sons of God, came to present themselves before the Lord.’‡ It is evident, then, that the intervals of these seasons are spent in other employments ; and when they present themselves before God, it does not sufficiently appear that mere adoration

\* See Rev. iv. 10, 11.

† Nat. Hist. of Enthusiasm, pp. 153, 4, 5.

‡ Job i. 6.—ii. 1.



and praise is their only business at the throne. In the very place which I have cited, it seems more natural to suppose, that these angelic spirits came thither rather to render an account of their several employments, and the success of their messages to other worlds. And why may we not suppose such a blessed variety of employment among the spirits of men too ?"—“ Among the pleasures and engagements of the upper world, there shall be always something new and entertaining ; for the works and the dominions of God are vastly beyond all our comprehensions. And what a perpetual change, what a glorious but improving rotation of business and joys shall succeed one another through all the ages of eternity, we shall never know till we come amongst them.”

The arguments of Dr. Chalmers in favour of our having real, material bodies, are strong and conclusive, as also those which go to prove heaven itself to be a material place :—

“The last day will be a day of triumph to the righteous—because the day of the *re-entrance* of the spirit to its much loved abode, where its faculties, so far from being shut up into captivity, will find their free and kindred development in such material organs as are suited to them. The fact of the resurrection proves, that, with man at least, the state of a disembodied spirit is a state of unnatural violence—and that the resurrection of his body is an essential step to the highest perfection of which he is susceptible.”

“There will, it is true, be a change of personal constitution between a good man before his death, and a good man after his resurrection—not, however, that he will be free from his body, but that he will be set free from the corrupt principle which is in his body—not that the materialism by which he is now surrounded will be done away, but that the taint of evil by which this materialism is now pervaded, will be done away.”

“The imagination of a total and diametric opposition between the region of sense and the region of spirituality, certainly tends to abate the interest with which we might

otherwise look to the perspective that is on the other side of the grave: and to deaden all those sympathies that we might else have with the joys and the exercises of the blest in paradise." In another passage, Dr. C. represents death as an essential stepping stone to paradise.

Scripture speaks of the disembodied soul as entering paradise immediately on the death of the body, in which interpretation Dr. C. seems plainly to agree, but it will be perceived that he here confuses this place with the heaven on the other side of the grave, and where man is to ascend after his body hath left the tomb. He adds, that we are then to *re-enter* it,—of course that we had been in it *before*, and yet he speaks of a new heavens and a new earth *to be created* "for the accommodation of the righteous;" which creation cannot be,—indeed, is not said by this author to be, until the formation which we now see and inhabit has passed away, since it is the globe of this earth which he refers to, and that it is to be remodelled to suit the purposes of another more extended garden of Eden, only that it shall be no longer a state of probation, but of blissful reward and enjoyment. To argue that heaven is *now* tenanted by happy spirits, and yet that it will not be created or formed for their reception till the last day, is like the determination of the corporation who resolved to build a new court-house, and to use the materials of the old in constructing the new, at the same time intending to inhabit the old till the new was built! Wherever the separate souls of the just are thought now to be,—although it may be *asserted*, yet it cannot be *argued* that they are *in heaven*, for it must be admitted that they are in a *disembodied* state, and this, Dr. C. properly calls one of "unnatural violence": Now, in heaven, man shall be subject to no such state of violence or disunion between soul and body—therefore, souls have not arrived at the scene of their great reward in the house of their Father, but remain under charge of the Son, reserved unto the judgment. The great day of triumph, too, in which our spirits would rejoice on entering heaven after

death, would surely be that on which they were admitted to it; *not the last day*, if they had been allowed an entrance long before that time, and been living there ever since the separation from the body at the termination of mortal life. But the last day will certainly be the time of their admission after this life—the day of their glorious entry and none other; so, as it has not yet dawned—none as yet are in these delightful mansions of bliss promised to the righteous.

In “the new economy which *is to be* reared,” Dr. C. goes on, “for the accommodation of the blessed, there will be materialism, not merely new heaven, but also a new earth, distinguished from the present, (which is an abode of rebellion,) by being an abode of righteousness.\* We know that a solid, material earth may form the dwelling of sinless creatures in full converse and friendship with the Being who made them,—that instead of being a place of exile for outcasts, it may have a broad avenue of communication with the spiritual world, for the descent of ethereal beings from on high†—that, like the member of an extended family, it may share in the regard and attention of the other members, and along with them be gladdened by the presence of Him who is the Father of them all. To inquire how this can be, were to attempt a wisdom beyond Scripture: but to assert that this has been, and therefore may be, is to keep most strictly and modestly within the limits of the record. For, we there read, that God framed an apparatus of materialism, which, on his own surveying, he pronounced to be all very good, and the leading features of which may still be recognised among the substances that are around us;—and that he created man with the bodily organs and senses which we now wear—and placed him under the very canopy that is over our heads—and spread around him a scenery, perhaps lovelier in its tints—and more smiling and serene

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\* It would be impossible for Dr. Chalmers to say, in plainer language, that the eternal place of reward is not, in his belief, yet ready for the reception of the saints; and if it is not, then they are not in it, but somewhere else.

† Although this would appear to refer to a *material* high-way, yet such cannot be meant; and would be entirely unnecessary even to our comprehension.

in the whole aspect of it, but certainly made up, in the main, of the same objects that still compose the prospect of our visible contemplations—and there, working with his hands in a garden, and with trees on every side of him, and even with animals sporting at his feet, was this inhabitant of earth, in the midst of all these earthly and familiar accompaniments, in full possession of the best immunities of a citizen of heaven—sharing in the delights of angels, and while he gazed on the very beauties which we ourselves gaze upon, rejoicing in them most as the tokens of a present and presiding Deity.”—“Man, at the first, had for his place this world, and at the same time for his privilege, an unclouded fellowship with God, and for his prospect an immortality, which death was neither to intercept nor put an end to. He was terrestrial in respect of condition, and yet celestial in respect both of character and enjoyment. His eye looked outwardly on a landscape of earth, while his heart breathed upwardly in the love of heaven. And although he trode the solid platform of our world, and was compassed about with its horizon, still was he within the circle of God’s favoured creation, and took his place among the freemen and the denizens of the great spiritual commonwealth.

“This may serve to rectify an imagination, of which we think that all must be conscious—as if the grossness of materialism was only for those who had degenerated into the grossness of sin; and that, when a spiritualizing process had purged away all our corruption, then by the stepping stones of a death and resurrection, we should be borne away to some ethereal region, where sense, and body, and all in the shape either of audible sound or of tangible substance were unknown. And hence that strangeness of impression which is felt by you, should the supposition be offered, that in the place of eternal blessedness there will be ground to walk upon; or scenes of luxuriance to delight the corporeal senses, or the kindly intercourse of friends talking familiarly, and by articulate converse together; or, in short, any thing that has the least resemblance to a local territory, fill-

ed with various accommodations, and peopled over its whole extent by creatures formed like ourselves—having bodies such as we now wear, and faculties of perception, and thought, and mutual communication, such as we now exercise. The common imagination that we have of paradise on the other side of death, is that of a lofty aerial region where the inmates float in ether, or are mystically suspended upon nothing—where all the warm and sensible accompaniments which gave such an expression of strength, and life, and colouring to our present habitation, are attenuated into a sort of spiritual element, that is, meagre and imperceptible, and utterly uninviting to the eye of mortals here below—where every vestige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly ecstasies, with which it is felt impossible to sympathise. The holders of this imagination forget, all the while, that really there is no essential connexion between materialism and sin—that the world which we now inhabit, had all the amplitude and solidity of its present materialism, before sin entered into it—that God, so far, on that account, from looking slightly upon it, after it had received the last touch of his creating hand, reviewed the earth, and the waters, and the firmament, and all the green herbage, with the living creatures, and the man whom he had raised in dominion over them, and ‘he saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was all very good.’ They forget, that on the birth of materialism it stood out in the freshness of those glories which the great Architect of Nature had impressed upon it, and that ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ They forget the appeals that are made every where in the Bible to the material workmanship—and how, from the face of these heavens, and the garniture of this earth that we tread upon, the greatness and the goodness of God are reflected on the view of his worshippers.”—“By the convulsions of the last day, it may be shaken and broken down from its present arrangements, and thrown into such fitful agitations, as that the whole of its existing frame work shall fall to pieces.”—“And thus may the earth again become without form and void, but without one particle of its sub-

stance going into annihilation. Out of the ruins of this second chaos may another heaven and another earth again be made to rise, and a new materialism, with other aspects of magnificence and beauty, emerge from the wreck of this mighty transformation ; and the world be peopled as before with the varieties of material loveliness, and space be again lighted up into a firmament of material splendour.

“ Were our place of everlasting blessedness so purely spiritual, as it is commonly imagined, then the soul of man, after death, having quitted his body, would quit it conclusively. That mass of materialism with which it is associated upon earth, and which many regard as a load and as an incumbrance, would have leave to putrify in the grave, without being revisited by supernatural power, or raised again out of the inanimate dust into which it had resolved. If the body be indeed a clog, and a confinement to the spirit, instead of its commodious tenement, then would the spirit feel enlightened by the departure it had made, and expatiate in all the buoyancy of its emancipated powers over a scene of enlargement. And this is doubtless the prevailing imagination. But why then, after having made its escape from such a thralldom, should it ever recur to the prison-house of its old materialism, if a prison-house it really be ? Why should the disengaged spirit again be fastened to the drag of that grosser and heavier substance, which many think has only the effect of weighing down its activity, and infusing into the pure element of mind an ingredient which serves to cloud and to enfeeble it ? In other words, what is the use of a day of resurrection, if the union which then takes place is to deaden or to reduce all those energies that are commonly ascribed to the living principle in a state of separation ? But as a proof of some metaphysical delusion upon this subject,”—“ it would appear, that to embody the spirit is not the stepping stone to its degradation, but to its preferment.”\*

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\* It should be remembered, at the same time, that the Scripture assures us that our future bodies shall all be *changed* from what they are at present,

To look forward to such a heaven as Dr. Chalmers shows is nowise incompatible with the descriptions in Holy Writ, is greatly more enlivening and attractive than that indefinite and totally incomprehensible place so far beyond all earthly imaginations which many describe from their own distorted fancies, (if description it can be called,) or by attempting to literally embody the metaphorical phraseology of particular parts of Scripture. "It altogether holds out," as this learned divine says, "a warmer and more alluring picture of the elysium that awaits us, when told, that there will be beauty to delight the eye ; and music to regale the ear ; and the comfort that springs from all the charities of intercourse between man and man, holding converse as they do on earth, and gladdening each other with the benignant smiles that play on the human countenance, or the accents of kindness that fall in soft and soothing melody from the human voice. There is much of the innocent, and much of the inspiring, and much to affect and elevate the heart, in the scenes and contemplations of materialism—and we do hail the information in our text, that after the dissolution of its present frame work, it will again be varied and decked out anew in all the graces of its unfading verdure, and of unbounded variety,—that in addition to our direct and personal view of the Deity, when he comes down to tabernacle

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and those of the elect shall be *glorified*, or made more suited than they are now for inhabitants of heaven ; but still we have every reason to believe that they will be *material*, not *spiritual* bodies. They shall not be subject to pain and disease, nor weigh down the spirit as earthly bodies do, which war with the pure feelings of the soul ; so they must be of a very different nature. Even those who are not to taste of death shall be changed, and the Apostle John says, that—"It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

It will be remarked in the foregoing quotation from Dr. Chalmers that he allows the resurrection and our being again clothed with bodies *to precede* our entering heaven. If he is right, and of this there can be no doubt, then, as the resurrection is yet to come, none have yet entered heaven ; and as the soul does not sleep, nor is supposed by him to do so, here is an *admission* of a Middle State, in which souls are at present.

with men, we shall also have the reflection of him in a lovely mirror of his own workmanship—and that instead of being transported to some abode of dimness and mystery, so remote from human experience, as to be beyond all comprehension, we shall walk for ever in a land replenished with those sensible delights and those sensible glories, which, we doubt not, will be most profusely scattered over the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

—“There will be a firm earth, as we have at present, and a heaven stretched over it, as we have at present ; and it is not by the absence of these, but by the absence of sin, that the abodes of immortality will be characterised.”—“We are now walking on a terrestrial surface, not more compact, perhaps, than the one we shall hereafter walk upon ; and are now wearing terrestrial bodies, not firmer and more solid, perhaps, than those we shall hereafter wear.”

In his sermon *on the nature of the kingdom of God*, Dr. Chalmers still further pursues this subject :—“There may be sights of beauty and brilliancy for the eye. There may be sounds of sweetest melody for the ear. There may be innumerable sensations of delight, from the adaptation which obtains between the materialism of surrounding heaven, and the materialism of our own transformed and glorified bodies. There may even be poured upon us, in richest abundance, a higher and a nobler class of enjoyments.”—“Man’s taste may find an ever-recurring delight in the panorama of its sensible glories ; and his fancy wander untired among all the realities and all the possibilities of created existence ; and his understanding may be feasted to ecstasy among those endless varieties of truth which are ever pouring in a rich flood of discovery upon his mind ; and even his heart be kept in a glow of warm and kindly affection among the cordialities of that benevolence by which he is surrounded. All this is possible to be conceived of heaven.”

“When a man gets to heaven above, he will not there meet with a happiness differing in character from that which



he now feels ; and only higher in gradation. There may be crowns of material splendour. There may be trees of unfading loveliness. There may be pavements of emerald—and canopies of brightest radiance, and gardens of deep and tranquil security—and palaces of proud and stately decoration,—and a city of lofty pinnacles, through which there unceasingly flows a river of gladness, and where jubilee is ever rung with the concord of seraphic voices. But these are only the accessories of heaven. They form not the materials of its substantial blessedness.”—“ But if on earth there is no tendency towards a holy and perfect character—no delight in prayer—no relish for the sweets of intercourse with our Father, now unseen, but then to be revealed to the view of his immediate worshippers . . . . then, let our imaginations kindle as they may, with the beatitudes of our fictitious heaven, the true meaning of the Bible is what we shall never reach, because it is a heaven that we are not fitted to enjoy.” —“ The main reward of paradise is spiritual joy—and that, springing at once from the love and the possession of spiritual excellence. It is such a joy as sin extinguishes on the moment of its entering the soul ; and such a joy as is again restored to the soul, and that immediately on its being restored to righteousness.”

The pleasures of heaven will be unalloyed by any admixture of pain or sorrow, and they shall therefore be enjoyed to their fullest extent, which is seldom, if ever, the case with those on earth ; and this difference alone must greatly enhance even sources of happiness with which we are acquainted, without essentially or totally altering its nature. Pleasures of all kinds here are not only extremely fleeting, but are almost unknown, pure, and unmixed with corroding cares, which soon make them pass away like dreams, and be forgotten. Even the most lovely parts of the earth itself, in which, at the first glance, we might think that we could dwell for ever delighted, are quickly found to have some inherent curse attached to them. In particular, they are commonly the places where disease or misery of some peculiar

nature lurk to seize us,\* and there is, in short, little earthly happiness in regard to which its apparent possessor does not openly or secretly exclaim—"Yet all this availeth me nothing as long as Mordecai the Jew sitteth at the king's gate,"—or for some equally good or much better reason.

\* "The spots that are canopied by the serenest skies, where the air is the purest to the vision, and the most genial to the feelings, where nature, too, has been most lavish of her charms, are those where the visitations of pestilence are the most frequent and the most destructive; coming as if in mockery of the judgment of man, to show him, that spots which seem to him the Edens of the world, are like the Eden of old, gardens where death lies in ambush." *Plague at Gibraltar. Monthly Mag. March, 1832.*

"One might conceive the country around Baroda" (East Indies) "as a park laid out for magnificence, and truly it might have answered as such even for the palace of the great Mogul, but truth obliges me to say, that it cannot give so much pleasure as might be expected from such a piece of fairy ground, and for these two weighty reasons;—first, you are never secure from robbery and even murder if you resist, no precaution can save you, and if you should kill one of these robbers in your own defence, you must leave the country immediately, to prevent the effects of their revenge. The other counterpoise to the pleasure arising from seeing this beautiful country, is the dreadful sickness of it. Sometimes not a single officer is fit for duty, and the cases too often end fatally." *MS. Journal of Military Operations in Guzerat. 1814.*

"It is by no means easy to enjoy the beauties of American scenery in the west, even when you are in a neighbourhood that affords much to admire; at least, in doing so, you run considerable risk of injuring your health. Nothing is considered more dangerous than exposure to mid-day heat, except exposure to evening damp, and the twilight is so short, that if you set out on an expedition, when the fervent heat subsides, you can hardly get half a mile before 'sun down,' as they call it, warns you that you must run or drive home again, as fast as possible, for fear you should get 'a chill.'"—"It was indeed a mortifying fact, that whenever we found out a picturesque nook, where turf, and moss, and deep shade, and a crystal stream, and fallen trees, majestic in their ruin, tempted us to sit down, and be very cool and very happy, we invariably found that that spot lay under the imputation of malaria." *Trollope's Domestic Manners of the Americans. Vol. I. pp. 247—9.*

Although such descriptions may be thought at first to have but slight connexion with the pleasures of heaven, yet it is here of consequence to consider how the very same places even on earth, might be rendered fit for the residence of happy beings, if their attendant miseries were merely removed, since our "new earth" or heavenly residence may not be dissimilar in some respects to our present.

Here, the king on his throne at the height of his power, the warrior in the hour of his triumph, and the courtier at the summit of his ambition—all may feel some deep cherished sorrow—some hope disappointed—a phantom in their arms for the substance which they expected to grasp ; and the face that smiles apparently the most free from care, oft does so to conceal misery at the heart. Here, when even no actual cause for sorrow exists, we fear the future, and tremble for what to-morrow may bring forth. How different shall all this be in a heavenly residence ! From these considerations it will be seen how pleasures of a nature even similar in some measure to those which we already have known, may be increased so as to be worthy of a heavenly state.

Although heaven be a real material place, as represented by Dr. Chalmers, and have trees, and flowers, and natural beauties of many different kinds, it does not follow that they shall be similar to those upon earth, or to any that we can now conceive. This will appear the more probable, when we reflect how very different the features of one country, even upon the earth, are from those of another, and our telescopes show us that the scenery on the moon—the nearest of the heavenly bodies—must be very different in some respects from any scenes or things upon earth. The supposed materialism of heaven, therefore, does not necessarily include a belief that it is exactly of a nature we are accustomed either to see or to hear of. Although heaven shall be in so far, like this our present globe, as to be material, —a place where we shall have ground to walk on and air over our heads, it is not necessary for all this that the earth itself, in a renewed state, shall be that happy place. We may have a new earth and atmosphere, but this would not of necessity presuppose that the one we now live on is to be the one referred to. The sun, moon, and every star which we see, are more than probably as real and solid structures as the earth. The *locality* of heaven is quite another question, on which its materialism does not depend, and several objections might be cited from Scripture, besides natural

ones, to show that the earth cannot be intended for our eternal residence. The fact, however, of its materialism, is of the greatest consequence to establish, previous to our attempting to form definite ideas of the pleasures or employments of its inhabitants, so I shall add the opinions of several other eminent men who have come to the same conclusion, and who were certainly more capable of judging than those whose ideas of the universe are little beyond the mere fancies of the uninformed, however truly devout they may be ; with the Scriptures, at the same time, all which shall be here brought forward more fully agrees than opposite conclusions would do.

“That heaven,” says Mr. Muston, “is a local and common mansion provided for the final residence of the just, is a fact which has always been admitted, with the exception of a few individuals, who have so attempted to refine their notions of future happiness, as to render them no less visionary and unintelligible than repugnant to the evidence of reason and Scripture. What particular part of creation is assigned for this purpose is an inquiry which, as it is rather a matter of curiosity than of real importance, revelation does not attempt to satisfy. It is enough for us to know, that in some distant region of the universe there is a material heaven prepared for the faithful ; and to assure us of this, we have a variety of clear and undubitable evidence. . There must of necessity be a place which contains the bodies of Enoch and Elijah, and the glorified person of our Saviour, who ascended into heaven in visible grandeur. And though the bodies in which the souls of believers will be clothed on the morning of the resurrection will be purified from every element of grossness, and seed of corruption, which may enter into the constitution of the mortal tabernacle, and will be so refined as to justify the figurative application of the epithet ‘spiritual,’ in the description given concerning them, yet they will still be material and organized structures, and will require some depository or local habitation in which they may dwell. In accordance with this general argument are the representations of Scripture. The lan-

guage which is used to describe the final abode of the righteous, not only gives us the most exalted views of its beauty and grandeur, but conveys to our minds the notion of place in the strict sense of the word. Our Lord himself, in his last address to his disciples, assured them that he was going to prepare a place for them, and spoke of it in terms at once sublime and unspeakably endearing, when he called it his 'Father's house,' containing many or various mansions.\*

Mr. Muston is scripturally correct in describing heaven as a certain local place, as solid perhaps as the earth, and as diversified with the most beautiful creations of God, but, like most other writers, he erroneously considers it the same as the *paradise* for souls, of the Scriptures. After saying that it is a place *prepared for the final residence of the just*—"the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world," he adds—"Thither the disembodied spirits of the just *are already gone*, and to the same abode are all good men advancing."†

A Country Pastor notices, that "the eternal habitation of the blessed is described by the Apostle, as 'new heavens and a new earth'; meaning, by 'heavens,' the air we breathe and sky over our heads, as he means, by 'earth,' the place on which we dwell. And his description must be understood, in a great degree at least, literally; since the blessed in the next world, having *real* material bodies, as now, though different from their present bodies, must inhabit some *place* fitted for the reception of such bodies: though exempt, of course, from the evils of the world they now dwell in, and from all temptations that could lead them into sin."‡

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\* "—This special fabrication of all things which now surround us, leads the mind to infer and believe, that our next state and mode of existence will be as elaborately and specifically provided, according to His appointing will and established designs." *Turner's Sacred History of the World.* 1832.

† Recognition in the world to come. pp. 74—77.

‡ Scripture Revelations of a Future State. p. 214.

In further considering the probable sources of enjoyment in heaven, it may greatly assist us if we direct our attention to *the works* of God, which he has so evidently framed from most sublime conceptions and with amazing power. His goodness and wisdom are reflected from the visible workmanship of his hands, and though many now gaze with indifference on every natural phenomenon and work of the Divine Creator, or look on them as on things requiring no admiration from being so common, yet the contemplation of these may in a future life be viewed in a very different light, and with infinitely greater interest than what we now do.

A popular authoress of the present day, notices that "it was the opinion of John Ray, a celebrated natural philosopher, who died more than a hundred years since, that a clear understanding of the works of God is one of the sources of happiness reserved for the enjoyment of the blessed in heaven. He thought that those rational faculties which chiefly distinguish us from the inferior animals, will there be actively employed in contemplating the works of Providence, observing the divine art and wisdom manifested in the structure and design of them, and ascribing to the great Architect the praise and glory due to him."\* Adding, "I own this seems to me a very likely supposition, and if so, it affords great encouragement to apply our minds to those studies *here*, which may constitute a large portion of our happiness *hereafter*."†

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"We walk in darkness—but not always thus;

The veil shall be withdrawn, and man be shown

Mysterious laws of nature now unknown :

Yes ! what is shrouded from our feeble sight,

Or now seems but a chaos overgrown

With marvels, hidden in the womb of night,

Shall burst upon our view, clear, beautiful, and bright."

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\* Wisdom of God in the Creation. p. 148.

† Geological Sketches and Glimpses of the ancient earth, by Maria Hack.

‡ The Moonlight Churchyard, by Delta. Blackwood's Mag.. Feb. 1832:

“There is an intimate connexion between *the Word* and *the Works* of God: They reflect a mutual lustre on each other, and the discoveries made in the latter are calculated to expand our conceptions, and to direct our views of the revelations contained in the former.”\*

The material works of God call on every being possessed of common feeling to praise Him, and to acknowledge these instances of his power, wisdom, and goodness, and thus tend to raise feelings of religious adoration which are so highly beneficial to us, if properly improved; and they may have far more effect on us hereafter, when we shall be better acquainted with them. Those who believe that all created things, except man, shall be utterly destroyed at the last day, found this idea upon mistaken interpretations of Scripture, which they would thus render inconsistent with itself, and the conjectures regarding heaven by Dr. Chalmers, eloquently show that material wonders of creation may then as now meet our view, and surround us for ever.

“The contemplation of the works of creation elevates the mind to the admiration of whatever is great and noble, accomplishing the object of all study, which, in the elegant language of Sir James Mackintosh, is to inspire the love of truth, of wisdom, of beauty, especially of goodness, the highest beauty, and of that supreme and eternal mind, which contains all truth and wisdom, all beauty and goodness. By the love of delightful contemplation and pursuit of these transcendent aims for their own sake only, the mind of man is raised from low and perishable objects, and prepared for those high destinies which are appointed for all those who are capable of them.”†

“The just Creator condescends to write,  
In beams of inextinguishable light,  
His names of Wisdom, Goodness, Power, and Love,  
On all that blooms below, or shines above;

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\* Phil. of a Future State.

† Preliminary Dissertation to Mechanism of the Heavens, by Mrs. Somerville.

To catch the wandering notice of mankind,  
And teach the world, if not perversely blind,  
His gracious attributes ; and prove the share  
His Offspring hold in his paternal care.”—COWPER.

The Scriptures represent the Creator as *rejoicing* in all his works, and it is a most natural representation, that that which must have been formed with so much attention should retain his regard. His providence must still be directed ~~towards~~ them with the most minute observation, since the very hairs of our head are numbered, and a sparrow falls not to the ground without his knowledge. “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight ; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”\* Moses tells us that all the works of creation answered the intention of their Maker, and were the objects of his approbation.† They are indeed great beyond expression and excellent. They display his glory in a manner that must ever amaze the whole intellectual creation. But who can conceive the pleasure, if such a word may be here used, which the creating and governing mind must have in them ; in works so magnificent, so beautiful, and all whose motions are so wonderfully regulated,—the extreme nicety of adjustment in many of which, amazes the astronomer beyond what he can express.

In the civ. Psalm, the royal Author, as one reason for praising God, says—“O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches, so is the great and wide sea also.”—“The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.”—“He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.”‡ In the cxlv. Psalm, the poet exclaims—“As for me, I will be talking of thy worship ; thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works.” “*All thy works praise thee*, O Lord : and thy saints give thanks unto thee. They show the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power.” In the cxliii. Psalm, we find that the king mused upon all the

\* Heb. iv. 13.

† Gen. i. 31.

‡ Ps. cxi. 2. 4.



works of the Lord, and exercised himself in their study.\* In Rev. iv. 11. It is said—"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: *for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*"†

Here, remarks Mr. Dick,—“the material works of God are represented as the *foundation or reason* of the thanksgivings and adorations of the heavenly host, and the language evidently implies, that these works are the subject of their contemplation—that they have beheld a **bright** display of Divine perfection in their structure and arrangement—that they are enraptured with the enlarged views of the Divine glory which these works exhibit—that their hearts, full of gratitude and admiration, are ever ready to burst forth in ascriptions of glory, honour, and power” to Him who called the vast assemblage of created things into existence. In other scenes exhibited in the same book, the saints who had come out of great tribulation are mentioned as celebrating the Divine praises in this triumphant song:—“Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty—just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” The first part may be considered as the result of their contemplation of the magnificent fabric of the universe, and the Omnipotent energies which its movements display; and the last part of it as the result of their study and investigation of the moral government of God in his providential arrangements. For the words plainly imply that they have acquired such an expansive view of the works of God, as constrains them to declare, that they are “great and marvellous,” and that they have attained such a knowledge of the Divine dispensations, as enables them to perceive that all the ways of the King of heaven are “righteous and true.”—“For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work:

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\* Ver. 5.

† “‘Nature,’ says the eloquent Buffon, ‘is the external throne of *Divine Majesty*, and man, when he studies her, rises by degrees to the internal throne of Omnipotence;’ and that he *may* do so, God has endowed him above all his other creatures, with the faculty of acquiring conceptions so far beyond the apparent limits of his understanding.” Martin’s Christian Philosopher. 1832.

I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O Lord, how great are thy works ! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not ; neither doth a fool understand this.”\* “He doth great things past finding out ; yea, and wonders without number.”† “Lo, these are parts of his ways : but how little a portion is heard of him ? but the thunder of his power who can understand ?”‡ “I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, *and of thy wondrous works.*”§ “Hearken unto this ! stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.”||

And shall those works afford no pleasure in heaven to those who admire and find pleasure in tracing his astonishing creative power and contrivance on earth ? Are there no works of his hand in heaven worthy of notice ? No sublime scenery there to call forth our admiration—to excite and increase our devotion to its Maker ? Are we to despise the astonishment—the attention—the investigation into the works of God, which the most pious and learned men of all ages have shown ? Were they wrong to draw from thence more exalted ideas of the Almighty ? or, in consequence of these studies, to see cause for an increase of love and praise to that Being who had thus displayed his beneficence to his creatures—in providing so profusely for their comfort and pleasure ?

It is not the great works alone which have been carefully formed by Divine skill, but the most minute are finished with an attention which proves their having met with equal regard in their formation.¶ No marks can be found on any

\* Ps. xcii. 4—6.

† Job ix. 10.

‡ Job xxvi. 14.

§ Ps. cxlv. 5.

|| Job xxxvii. 14.

¶ “The marvellous immensity and multiplicity of the universe which the Creator has made and governs, present to the thoughtful mind such a tremendous Deity, that we cannot but dread, lest greatness so fearfully vast, should have no community of feeling with us, and should not condescend to maintain any kind relations towards us, or with the earth, our abode, which is so inconsiderable a portion of general nature.”—“It is therefore delightful to see, by these miniature existences, small almost to invisibility, and by their careful organization, as finely contrived as in the grandest creature, that greatness and littleness make no difference to Him in His Creation or His Providence. They reveal laws, that magnitude is nothing in His sight ; that

thing of haste or oversight in contrivance, or of apparent want of care with regard to it. Even those creatures which are too small for human eyes to see, have all the means given to them of living and acting in the manner designed at their creation. How infinitely superior in the workmanship are all the works of God upon the earth, to those of man, from the greatest to the least. The point of the finest needle appears blunt and rough when viewed by a microscope ; but the sting of a bee, for instance, bears the highest powers of that instrument, without any but the most admirable finishing being discernible : The finest polished surface by the hand of art appears like a ploughed field, when looked at with high magnifying powers ; and, indeed, *polishing* with us, means no more than scratching finer and finer till the naked eye cannot see the scratches, whilst the polishing by nature is perfect under any inspection. The power of God, therefore, is displayed whether we look to the grand scale of his works, or to the most minute : He shows it in the creation of animalcules, as well as in the fixed stars ; so those who scoff at the admirers of the smallest works of creation, and ridicule those things as unworthy of notice, are guilty of a species of impiety. How much more to blame are those who feel no admiration of the great wonders of nature which we see on every side of us, both in the day and night ? Even a *fly* is an instance of omnipotent power—a proof that there is a God ;—no human genius could equal it, although the works of man are many of them also skilfully contrived and beautifully executed ; but in an immeasurable degree inferior to those of God as displayed before us. Man was never able to make any thing with a principle of motion within it which could lift itself into the air, and be capable

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He is pleased to frame and to regard the small and the weak, as benignly and as attentively as the mighty and the massive.”—“ We are high and low, great and small, as to each other, but not to Him. The ant is as full of life and comfort and curious instincts, and as skilfully organized, as the lion or the whale. It is therefore a marvellous property of the incomprehensible nature of our God, that He delights in all His creations.”

of supporting itself there, or so as to fly. Stories are still repeated of artificial creatures which have been so contrived, but they are merely copied from sources of no authority by persons ignorant of the laws of mere mechanism.\*

It is under the microscope that the minute works of God are shown to most advantage, and where only the exquisite beauty and construction of some of them can be duly appreciated. We may afterwards require no artificial assistance of any kind, either telescopic or microscopic, in order to be able to see all the wonders of that region where we shall reside in our eternal state, or in those which we may occasionally be permitted to visit.

While on the subject of heavenly pleasures, Dr. Watts exclaims—"How numerous are all the products of the earth upon her green surface! And all within her dark bowels! All the vegetable and mineral kingdom! How many centuries would all these entertain a heavenly inquirer!"—"The worlds of air, and the worlds of water, the planetary and the starry worlds, are still new objects rich with curiosities; these are all monuments of divine wisdom, and fit subjects for the contemplation of the blessed. Nor can we be supposed to have for ever done with them all when we leave this body; and that for two reasons; one is, because God has never yet received the honour due to his wisdom and power displayed in the material creation, from the hands or tongues of men. And the other is, because the spirits of the just shall be joined to bodies again, and then they shall certainly have necessary converse with God's material works and worlds: though perhaps they have more acquaintance with them now in their separate state than we are apprised of.†

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\* It is not meant that a thing may not be rendered *specifically lighter* than common air, and so rise up into it like a balloon; but this cannot be done from a power in any way exerted by the work of art itself. There is an account of an artificial pigeon having been constructed so as to fly to meet some conqueror or great man on his triumphant return, which the story avers that it not only did, but that it hovered over his head and returned with him of itself! All such accounts are equally undeserving of credit.

† In so far, at least, as respects all those works *here*, we have no founda-

“And besides all these material works of God, what an unknown variety of other wonders belong to the world of pure spirits, which lie hid from us, and are utterly concealed behind the veil of flesh and blood ! What are their natures and the reach of their powers ! What ranks and orders they are distributed into ! What are their governments, their several employments, the different customs and manners of life in the various and most extensive regions of that intellectual world ! What are their messages to ~~our~~ earth, or the other habitable globes, and what capacities are they endowed with to move or influence animate or inanimate bodies ! All these, and a thousand more of a like nature, are made known doubtless to the inhabitants of heaven.”\*

“To suppose,” says Mr. Dick, “that such studies as that of the visible works of God will be abandoned, and such knowledge obliterated in a future state, would be to suppose, that these will not be contemplated in that state, and that redeemed men in the heavenly world will lose a part of their rational faculties, and remain inferior in their acquirements to the inhabitants of the earth, even in their present imperfect and degraded condition.”—“That the general system of nature will remain materially the same, when the present fabric of our globe is dissolved, may be argued—*1st*, From the immense number and magnitude of the bodies of which it is composed. *2dly*, *All these bodies are immensely distant from the earth.* Although we could wing our course with a swiftness equal to ten thousand miles a-day, it would require five millions of years before we could reach the nearest fixed star. *3dly*, The whole of this vast assemblage of

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tion for thinking so with regard to the disembodied spirits of the human race, but, on the contrary, ought to believe that they are all departed hence, and see nothing on this earth. But our globe may be very probably inhabited by an order of invisible beings of whom we know not any thing, who may view, with devout admiration, all the wonders it displays, who may be able to penetrate into the dark unfathomed caves of the ocean, and live in the pathless wilderness,

Where not a flower may blow to blush unseen,  
Nor waste its sweetness in the desert air.

\* Watts on the state of separated souls.

suns and worlds have no immediate connexion with the present constitution and arrangements of our globe. There are no celestial bodies that have any immediate connexion with the earth, or direct influence upon it, except the sun, the moon, and several of the planets; and therefore the more distant innumerable orbs beyond our system, cannot be supposed to be involved in the physical evils which the fall of man has introduced into this world; or to have the least connexion with any future change or catastrophe that may be supposed to befall the terraqueous globe.”\*

Our Creator has endowed man with abilities and faculties which enable him to contemplate the divine power, wisdom, and goodness in the works of creation, and shall we not take the trouble to put them to this noble use, and think we are nowise concerned in such studies?—or despise those who engage in them, as delighting in unprofitable pursuits? It has often been *asserted* that such will be of no use to us afterwards, or at least of no real benefit in a future state. On what *grounds* such a gratuitous assertion is made, it were difficult to discover, unless it may arise from the person who makes it being ignorant or careless on the subjects he treats so lightly; but he should recollect that his belief in this respect is in contradiction to the divine breathings of the Scriptures, and that the deepest pursuit of natural science is always joined with true piety and adoration of the Creator; into which, indeed, an investigation of His works almost inevitably leads. “The more we study the works of the Creator,” says Sir J. E. Smith,† “the more wisdom, beauty, and harmony become manifest, even to our limited apprehensions, and while we admire, it is impossible not to adore.”

Christians of all denominations have joined in considering the study of nature as highly conducive to the adoration of its divine Architect. The Rev. Demetrius Gallitzen, in his

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\* Philosophy of a Future State.

† F. R. S. and President of the Linnæan Society, London.

*Defence of Catholic Principles*, agrees with this sentiment in these words:—"By the help of natural philosophy, physic, anatomy, astronomy, and other sciences, many of the beauties and perfections of nature have been discovered, which give us the most exalted idea of the power and wisdom of their Creator; many more, however, are, and will remain wrapt up in mystery, and are thereby the better calculated to give us some, though faint, idea of the immensity of God. From what discoveries have been made, we are struck with astonishment at the wonderful harmony displayed in the whole system of nature, and every part of it."

Dr. Chalmers thinks that "it is truly a Christian exercise to extract a sentiment of piety from the works and the appearances of nature. It has the authority of the sacred writers upon its side, and even our Saviour himself gives it the weight and the solemnity of his example. 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.' He expatiates on the beauty of a single flower, and draws from it the delightful argument of confidence in God. He gives us to see that taste may be combined with piety, and that the same heart may be occupied with all that is serious in the contemplations of religion, and be at the same time alive to the charms and the loveliness of nature.

"The Psalmist takes a still loftier flight. He leaves the world, and lifts his imagination to that mighty expanse which spreads above it and around it. He wings his way through space, and wanders in thought over its immeasurable regions. Instead of a dark and unpeopled solitude, he sees it crowded with splendour, and filled with the energy of the Divine presence. Creation rises in its immensity before him, and the world, and all which it inherits, shrinks into littleness at a contemplation so vast and overpowering."\*

Dr. Burnet's ideas of the works of God tending greatly to enhance our pleasures in heaven, will be found in accord-

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\* From Dr. C.'s first Discourse, containing a *Sketch of Modern Astronomy*.

ance with what is here contended for. In his treatise on the state of departed souls, he affirms his belief on this point to be as follows :—"And, first of all, new and most wonderful objects will not be wanting to entertain the outward senses, when, being exalted above all the planets, we shall view the boundless ocean of the universe, and innumerable globes of worlds floating along the vast stream of the sky, each filled with its proper inhabitants : for the force of the eye and the visual faculty will be so ordained and constituted, that it will surpass all the power of the most artful glasses, and will reach and take in objects much greater and nobler, and more remote than we can discern in this muddy air."—"What raptures will not this prospect of the universe raise in us ?" \*

We see, in the works of nature† on the earth, admirable contrivance, great excellence and beauty in the state of the earth, and sea, so admirably adapted for the dwelling and subsistence of such multitudes of inhabitants, and in the regular changes and revolutions of nature, most wisely and happily adjusted to the great purposes for which the world was made. When we look upon the face of the earth, what wonders do we see in the vegetable productions of it ! What variety ! What beauty ! What magnificence in many of them ! How useful are they ! How fit for the purposes of life which they were intended to serve ! But how much greater the wonders of the animal world ! What immense numbers of different kinds, all differing in shape, in covering, in internal structure, in instinct ! What a close grada-

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\* Burnet, *de Statu Mortuorum*. Translated in the text.

† I should say of the Supreme Author of Nature. The deification of nature, by men of science, observes Dr. Goring, (for deified it surely is, when spoken of as an active agent,) is both improper and unphilosophical ; for if taken up in an ill-natured way, it may, according to the rigid import of language, be construed into an avowal of atheism.

See Note in Nat. Hist. of Living Objects for the Microscope. p. 9.

"Those things which are said to be done by *Nature*, are indeed done by *Divine power*."—PLATO.



tion between all creatures, and it is even sometimes difficult to say where one class begins and another ends: there are animals which can hardly be distinguished from plants; and plants which seem to have the properties and instincts of animals. From the oyster up to man, how linked together, as it were, is the chain of living things, rising by little and little in the scale of form and intellect. How curious and mysterious the contrivances of their instincts; of their connexions and relations to one another! How interesting it must be, in a future state, to learn all the secrets of nature—the causes of all natural phenomena,—to examine productions far more wonderful than those shown to us here—to compare, perhaps, those of different worlds, and to be continually more and more convinced of the skill and wisdom of Him who made and rules the universe. In the eternal mansions our minds shall be better prepared for admiring and studying the mysteries of creation. Instead of being adorned with material things, the abodes of the blessed (as before observed) are fancied by some to be so, only with mysterious and spiritual glories always the same. They can see no pleasure that would result from explanations being afterwards unfolded of the causes of a thousand things which pass before us. The taste acquired here, for the studying of nature, must be increased instead of lost in heaven, from the more efficient powers we shall have for investigation. Will the man prove less devout, or less rapturous in his praises of the Almighty, because he studies Him in His *works* as well as in His *word*? Will *he* be less sensible of His goodness and mercy to men, than the enthusiast who can look cold and unmoved upon the most glorious scenes in this world, or which we can discern in the expanse of heaven as well as in the lesser works of creation?

Mr. Muston's sentiments agree with these views: "To unravel the mysteries of their sublunary condition—to compare the past with the present—to retrace, in all its windings, the devious and perplexing path through which an invisible hand conducted them to the land of rest and bless-

edness, will surely constitute, in part, the employment of glorified saints.

——“The relation of the present to the future life, not only proves that the consciousness of our identity will in all probability be extended into eternity, but affords strong presumption that its energy will be augmented.”——“This opinion is farther supported by the consideration of the intellectual superiority to which the just will attain in a future life. For on the highest authority we know that they will be ‘made perfect,’ and this perfection must relate to the intellectual principle. Their mental powers will all be strengthened, and among the rest *memory*, which yields to no other faculty as it respects the importance of its office. But this improved and continued consciousness, viewed in connexion with the permanent and social condition of the righteous, renders their recognition and retrospective knowledge of each other almost a moral certainty. For, as in heaven, their mental faculties will be expanded, and their general condition perfected, it is reasonable to presume that the inlets of their knowledge will be increased, and the channels of communication adapted, in point of number and facility, to the high rank which they will hold in the scale of existence. By what mode, indeed, disembodied spirits carry on the commerce of thought and feeling, or what is the nature of the link which connects them with the material creation, it is impossible for human beings to know.”——“But since heaven\* is a social state, the interchange of ideas, and consequently, some mode of mental communication, must, it would seem, belong to disembodied intelligences. We know, however, that the righteous will, on the morning of the resurrection, be provided with bodies adapted to their

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\* Mr. Muston must here mean what he elsewhere very properly terms *the region of disembodied spirits*, and not heaven. In *heaven* we shall not be *disembodied*, and any diminution of our powers from the loss of our earthly bodies, and depending on them, will be supplied. In whatever way separate spirits communicate with each other, we can have no doubt they are capable of it, and that the souls in *Hades* can both distinguish each other, and keep up a social intercourse.

exalted station, and such as will prove in all respects suitable for their immortal spirits."

Mr. Dick thinks that—"The organs of vision of the redeemed inhabitants of our globe, after the resurrection, there is every reason to believe, will be capable of taking in a much more extensive range of view than at present. They may be endowed with qualities which will enable them to penetrate into the depths of space far beyond the reach of our most powerful telescopes, and to perceive with distinctness, objects at the distance of many billions of miles."

In the above quotation, this author makes the distinction between the state of the soul when existing somewhere while separated from the body, and while re-united after the resurrection; which he generally omits to do. In this instance, he appears to think that after the reunion of the soul and body, the Being so joined, will have greater powers of vision than we have who are alive, or than the spirits have in the middle state; and it may be so; but, as the soul when separated, cannot be supposed *blind*, as it were, and may have greatly extended powers beyond its *present*, the question is doubtful whether its powers will be much increased in heaven beyond what they are in the intermediate state, though it is very probable they may.

"Without taking into account the sublime manifestations of the Deity, exhibited in his visible creation, our ideas of celestial bliss must be very vague and confused, and our hopes of full and *perpetual* enjoyment in the future state, extremely feeble and languid. From the very constitution of the human mind, it appears, that in order to enjoy uninterrupted happiness, without satiety or disgust, it is requisite, that new objects and new trains of thought be continually opening to view. A perpetual recurrence of the same objects and perceptions, however sublime in themselves, and however interesting and delightful they may have been felt at one period, cannot afford uninterrupted gratification to minds endowed with capacious powers, and capable of ranging through all the depths of immensity. But all the

objects in this sublunary world and its environs, and all the events recorded in sacred and profane history, are not sufficient to occupy expansive minds of renovated intelligences for a million of ages, much less throughout an endless duration of existence. A series of objects and moral dispensations, more extensive than those immediately connected with the globe we inhabit, must, therefore, be supposed to engage the attention of the spirits of the just men made perfect, during the revolutions of eternal ages; in order that their faculties may be gratified and expanded—that new views of the Divine character may be unfolded—and that in the contemplation of these perfections they may enjoy a perpetuity of bliss.”\*

Dr. Watts says—“it is but reasonable to believe, that God will communicate so much of himself to us by degrees, as he sees necessary for our business and blessedness in that upper world. Can it be supposed that we should know every thing that belongs to God all at once, which he may discover to us gradually as our capacities improve? Can we think that our infant soul, that had no time for improvement here, when it enters into heaven shall know every thing concerning God that it can ever attain to through all the ages of its immortality? When a blessed spirit has dwelt in heaven a thousand years, and conversed with God and Christ, angels and fellow-spirits, during all that season, shall it know nothing more of the nature and wondrous properties of God than it knew the first moment of its arrival there? But I add further, the works of God shall doubtless be the matter of our search and delightful survey, as well as the nature and properties of God himself.”—“In his works we shall read his name, his properties, and his glories, whether we fix our thoughts on creation or providence.

“The works of God, and his wonders of creation in the known and unknown worlds, as to the number, the variety, and vastness of them, are almost infinite; that is, they transcend all the limits of our ideas, and all our present capaci-

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\* Philosophy of a Future State.

ties to conceive. Now there is none of these works of wonder but may administer some entertainment to the mind of man, and may richly furnish him with new matter for the praise of God in the long successions of eternity.”\*

As one part of the happiness of the righteous will consist in beholding the Divine glory as displayed in the universe, —so it will in all probability form one bitter ingredient in the future lot of the unrighteous, that they shall be deprived of the view of the magnificent arrangements in the system of nature,\* and be debarred from contemplating the sublime scenery of the Creator’s empire. This idea is corroborated by the declarations of Scripture, where they are represented “as banished from the new Jerusalem,” —“thrust out into outer darkness.”

In one of Mr. Pope’s letters there is the following passage:—“I am growing fit, I hope, for a better world, of which the light of the sun is but a shadow; for I doubt not but God’s works here, are what come nearest to his works there: and that *a true relish for the beauties of nature* is the most easy preparation and gentlest transition to an enjoyment of those in heaven.”—Again, in another letter he writes:—“I have just been taking a solitary walk by moonshine, full of reflections on the transitory nature of all human delights; and giving my thoughts a loose in the contemplation of those satisfactions which probably we may hereafter taste in the company of separate spirits, when we shall range the walks above, and perhaps gaze on this world at as vast a distance as we do now on those worlds. The pleasures we are to enjoy in that conversation must undoubtedly be of a nobler kind, and (not unlikely) may proceed from the discoveries each shall communicate to another, of God and of nature, for the happiness of *minds* can surely be nothing but knowledge.”

Mr. Pope seems here to have forgotten the junction of a *body* to the *mind* after the resurrection, and that the state of

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\* Discourse on the Happiness of Separate Spirits.

separation, wherever it is passed by the soul, may be but short, while the other is the beginning of an eternal one. As a Roman Catholic, he, of course, believed that there are many disembodied spirits in heaven already, but he does not seem so well aware of the Popish idea, that none but *perfect saints go directly* from the earth without the intervention of purgatory, else he would not speak of the *gentleness* of the transition from this world to the heavenly mansions being so common an occurrence as he appears to do in the above, and in other parts of his works. His ideas, at the same time, of the pleasures enjoyed by the inhabitants of heaven, agree with those of many sound divines and Christian philosophers.

In a sermon by Bishop Hobart, on the text—"Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known,"\*—he considers the happiness of a future state, *1st*, In reference to "the works of God; *2d*, The dispensations of Providence; and, *3d*, The economy of grace: in all these respects we now know only in part."

*1st*, With respect to the works of God. "Narrow is the range which our imperfect faculties permit us to take through the works of the Eternal. We are fastened to a small spot of creation, and our vision is limited to a short distance around us. The earth is but a diminutive part of that universe which the fiat of the Almighty Lord called into existence. And yet to this earth is our knowledge almost entirely ~~confined~~ confined. Innumerable worlds roll through the immeasurable space, which we in vain seek to grasp in our vision, and brighten that firmament whose elevation is not to be measured by human power. And the nature of these worlds, and the purposes for which they were created, whether like this which we inhabit, they too are the seats of intelligent agents, and what are the condition and the destination of these beings, are subjects of speculation but not of knowledge.

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\* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

“Not only is our knowledge thus limited *in extent*, it is imperfect *in degree*. How partial is our acquaintance with the bodies around us ! How many of their properties may be wholly unknown to us ! Numerous as are the beautiful and sublime scenes which delight and awe us, we can readily conceive that, with faculties more enlarged and vigorous, their beauty and sublimity would be more clearly discerned and more powerfully felt.

“Imperfect, then, as is our knowledge of the *appearances* of things, what do we know of their essences and causes.” —“The works of the Creator, calculated as the contemplation of them is to enlarge and elevate and delight the soul, and to fill us with profound admiration of the wisdom and power which arranged and preserves, and the goodness which animates them, we now ‘know only in part.’”

“But there is a higher state of being in which we shall ‘know even as we are known.’ With facilities enlarged and invigorated, we shall then range through all the works of the Almighty, and leave no part of creation unexplored. On ‘angel’s wing,’ and with angel’s ardour we shall soar through all the varied ranks of intelligences which animate the universe of God ; and even reach that eternal Being, from whom proceed the glory and the goodness, which, in the creatures who bear his image, we have admired and loved.

“The physical works, also, of the Creator, our improved faculties will enable us more clearly to discern. Their properties, their uses, their excellencies, their beautiful and sublime scenery, will no longer leave obscure impressions on our minds. They will shine upon us in their unveiled splendour, and excite the ever-increasing emotions of admiration and delight. Those secrets of nature which now baffle our researches will then be disclosed ; and the investigation and view of them will be a ceaseless source of wonder and pleasure.

“Thus occupied in contemplating the works of the Creator, no longer obscured to our vision, ‘we shall know even as we are known.’ And the glory and the goodness so strongly manifested in that ‘new heaven and new earth,’

through which, with enlarged and vigorous faculties, we shall unceasingly range, will call forth the emotions of holy adoration. The warm and loud chorus of praise shall ascend from the beatified hosts, 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!' "

The rapid progress of some men of great genius in intellectual acquirements, strikingly evinces the vigour and comprehension of the human faculties ; and if such varied and extensive acquisitions in knowledge can be attained, even amidst the frailties and physical impediments of this mortal state, it is easy to conceive with what energy and rapidity the most sublime investigations may be prosecuted in the future world, when the spirit is connected with an incorruptible and glorified body, and when every obstruction which now impedes its activity shall be removed. When endowed with new and vigorous senses, and full scope is afforded for exercising all the energies of their renovated faculties, they may be able to trace out the hidden springs of nature's operations.

The soul, when in the body, can receive pleasure in a thousand different ways, but it always aspires after what it is clear that on earth it never can attain. Our souls generally increase in knowledge from the time of their entrance into this world until separation from the body ; and there can be no doubt that a man who cultivated his mind would continue progressively to acquire new pleasures and additional wisdom on a vast variety of subjects as long as he lived, were his life ever so much prolonged. His soul, in short, is formed capable of it ; and shall we suppose that all his faculties are at once to be rendered stationary in their powers, and unable to acquire farther knowledge of any kind ? It is an innate property of the soul to be always thirsting for new pleasures and intelligence of some nature, —and shall this laudable and heaven-born distinction and

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\* (Rev. xv. 3.) See Sermons by the Right Rev. Bishop Hobart. Vol. II. p. 309.



pre-eminence of mind over body be lost in heaven? Impossible!

“There cannot be a stronger argument that God has designed us for a state of future happiness, and for that heaven which he has revealed to us, than that he has thus naturally qualified the soul for it, and made it a being capable of receiving so much bliss. He would never have made such faculties in vain, and have endowed us with powers that were not to be exerted on such objects as were suited to them. It is very manifest, by the inward frame and constitution of our minds, that he has adapted them to an infinite variety of pleasures and gratifications, which are not to be met with in this life.”\*

Mr. Dick differs, and with reason, from those who think that the mysteries of redemption will be sufficient to afford scope for the delightful investigation of the saints to all eternity. He admits “that contemplations of the Divine perfections, as displayed in human redemption, and of the stupendous facts which relate to that economy, will blend themselves with all the other exercises of redeemed intelligences. While their intellectual faculties are taking the most extensive range through the dominions of Him who sits upon the throne of universal nature, they will never forget that love ‘which brought them from darkness into light,’ and from the depths of misery to the splendours of eternal day. Their grateful and triumphant praises will ascend to the Father of glory, and the Lamb who was slain, for ever and ever. But, at the same time, the range of objects comprised within the scheme of redemption, in its reference to human beings, cannot be supposed, without the aid of other objects of contemplation, to afford full and uninterrupted scope to the faculties of the saints in heaven, throughout an *unlimited* duration.

“The contemplation of the mysterious plan of redemption, the eternity, the omnipresence of the Deity, his power,

and other attributes, will doubtless be mingled with all the other views and investigations of the saints in the heavenly world, in proportion as they advance through myriads of ages in the course of unlimited duration, and in proportion to the enlarged views they will acquire, of the distances and magnitudes of the numerous bodies which diversify the regions of the universe, their ideas of infinite space, and of eternal duration will be greatly expanded."

—"In the next place, Redemption may be considered in reference to the important *facts* connected with it, in which point of view, chiefly, it becomes a tangible object for the exercise of the moral and intellectual powers of man. These facts relate either to the part borne in it by Christ, or to the saints whose redemption he procured. The general facts relative to his sojournment in this world are recorded in the New Testament. These comprehend the circumstances of his birth, by which he took our nature upon him ; his private residence in Nazareth ; his journeys as a public teacher ; his miracles, sufferings, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. There are doubtless a variety of interesting facts, besides those recorded in the gospels, with which it would be highly gratifying to become acquainted : such as, the manner in which he spent his life, from the period of the first dawns of reason, to the time of his public ministrations—the mental and corporeal exercises in which he was engaged—the social intercourses in which he mingled—the topics of conversation suggested—the amusements (if any) in which he indulged—the pious exercises and sublime contemplations in which he indulged when retired from the haunts and society of men ; and particularly those grand and important transactions in which he had been employed since that moment when a cloud interposed between his body and the eyes of his disciples, after his ascent from Mount Olivet.—What regions of the material universe he passed through in his triumphant ascent—what intelligence of his achievements he conveyed to other worlds—what portion of the immensity of space, or what globe of the material fabric is the scene of his more immediate resi-

dence—what are the eternal splendours and peculiarities of that glorious world—what intercourse he has with the spirits of just men made perfect ; with Enoch and Elijah, who are already furnished with bodies, and with other orders of celestial intelligences—what scenes and movements will take place in that world, when he is about to return to our terrestrial sphere, to summon all the tribes of men to the general judgment ? The facts in relation to these and similar circumstances still remain to be disclosed, and the future details which may be given of such interesting particulars cannot fail to be highly gratifying to every one of the redeemed among men.”\*

In the above, Mr. Dick supposes that the souls of men shall be in *heaven* before they are judged or sentenced ! He must be referring to the Middle State as to part of what he supposes spirits to be engaged in, and these investigations may there employ their minds, but they must wait till they get to heaven after the judgment, before they shall with any degree of probability engage in very active duty or doings. Mr. D. adds, that the intermediate or separate state of souls, as he himself terms it, is an *unnatural* one, so he cannot mean that it is in *heaven*, for nothing unnatural or imperfect enters there.† All the topics, however, which he enumerates will, with great likelihood, be productive of most interesting inquiries to us in a future state, whether temporal or eternal.

In alluding to the “many other things which Jesus did,” besides those recorded in his gospel, St. John has assured us, that “if they should be written every one, even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written.”‡ Now, although this cannot be taken *literally*, when referring to the transactions of one person during thirty-three years, and can only be considered as expressing the very great extent of the records which Christ’s actions and life might have been the subject of,—yet what an ex-

\* Abridged from Phil. of a Future State.

† See the work just quoted. p. 251.

‡ Chap. xxi. 25.

tensive field does this expression of the Apostle's not open up to our contemplation!

The other facts with which we may become better acquainted, relate to ourselves, and comprehend those diversified circumstances in the course of providence, by means of which we shall be brought to salvation, and conducted through the scenes of mortality to the enjoyment of endless felicity. These will afford topics of many a discourse, to diversify and enliven the exercises of the saints in heaven. The series of Divine dispensations towards every individual, though different in a few subordinate particulars, partake of the same character. We shall then be delighted to trace how truly every thing had worked together for good to those who loved God: \* we shall find plainly demonstrated that those events of life which we deplored, at the time, as misfortunes, as in our blind conceptions here, designed only to mortify us, and plunge us in unnecessary suffering—were all intended and were in fact productive of benefit to our eternal welfare,—nay, in some instances, even contributed to our temporal good. But although the dispensations of Providence towards every one of his elect were as different from another as possible, and dwelt on by each with a pleasing deliberation, without regard to the time occupied in doing so, eternity would not be exhausted in such subjects alone.

“I freely allow,” observes Dr. Watts, “immediate Divine worship to take up a good part of their everlasting day, their Sabbath.”—“There may be other seasons also, when they are not immediately addressing the throne, but are most delightfully engaged in recounting to each other the wondrous steps of Providence, wisdom, and mercy, that rescued them from the very borders of hell and despair, and brought them through a thousand dangers and difficulties to the possession of that fair inheritance. When the great God shall unravel the scheme of his own counsels—shall unfold every part of his mysterious conduct, and set before them the rea-

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\* Rom. viii. 28.

son of every temptation they grappled with, and every sorrow they felt here on earth, and with what divine and successful influences they all wrought together to train them up for heaven,—what manner of surprising delight and charming conversation shall this furnish the saints in that blessed world.”

“Nor is it improper or unpleasant to suppose, that, among the rest of their celestial conferences, they shall show each other the fair and easy solution of those difficulties and deep problems in divinity, which had exercised and perplexed them here on earth, and divided them into little angry parties. They shall look back with holy shame on some of their learned and senseless distinctions, and be ready to wonder sometimes what trifles and impertinences had engaged them in dark and furious disputes. Darkness and entanglement shall vanish at once from many of those knotty points of controversy, when they behold them in the light of heaven, and the rest of them shall be matter of delightful instruction for superior spirits to bestow upon those of lower rank, or on the souls lately arrived at the regions of light.”\*

“It has frequently been asserted that the saints in heaven will enjoy perpetual rapture in perpetually gazing on the glorified humanity of Christ. The descriptions sometimes given of this circumstance, convey the idea of a vast concourse of spectators gazing upon a resplendent figure upon an eminence in the midst of them,—which surely must convey a very imperfect and distorted idea of the sublime employments of the saints. The exalted station now held by our Lord,—the occasional intercourse which they will have with him,—the discourses on the plans and operations of Deity,—the resplendent scenes to which he may guide

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\* Dr. W. here falls into the same misconception of heaven as was pointed out that Mr. Dick had done—considering the state of separation as heaven. All shall enter heaven together in one glorious host after the judgment is over.

them, and many other circumstances—will excite the highest admiration of him. He will, as the head of the redeemed, gradually direct them to those displays of divine perfection and glory, which will enlighten and entertain their mental powers. This seems to be intimated in such representations as the following :—‘The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water’: that is, he will instruct their minds with divine knowledge, and lead them to those sublime trains of thought which will fill them with joy.”\*

Celestial Beings may afterwards instruct us both in Hades and in Heaven, in regard to all the works of the Creator which shall surround us ; and there is nothing improbable in the idea, that even our Lord himself, (as he did in Palestine,) may sometimes condescend to discourse on these topics, which cannot fail to raise our wonder at the power and wisdom which made the whole of created things. His beneficence will then be eminently manifested in the habitations he has provided for his servants, where they shall reside, surrounded with a great variety of sources of pleasure of which mortals can figure but a faint idea.

Among the pleasures of heaven imagined by Dr. Watts, with great appearance of probability, we find the following conjectures :—“ Though we are very little acquainted, while we are on earth, with any of the planetary worlds, besides that which we inhabit, yet who knows how our acquaintance may be extended hereafter amongst the inhabitants of the various and distant globes ? And what frequent and swift journeys we may take hither, when we are disencumbered of this load of flesh and blood, or when our bodies are raised again, active and swift as sunbeams ? Sometimes we may entertain our curiosity there, and find millions of new discoveries of divine power and divine contrivance in those unknown regions, and bring back from thence new lessons of divine wisdom, or tidings of the affairs of those provinces,

to entertain our fellow-spirits, and to give new honours to God the Creator and the Sovereign. So a pious traveller in our lower world visits Africa or both the Indies : At his return he sits in a circle of attentive admirers, and recounts to them the wondrous products of those climates, and the customs and manners of those distant countries.—Then, at the end of every story, he breaks out into holy language, and adores the various riches and wisdom of God."\*

Such contemplations of the future, are far from being merely the wild dreamings of a speculative mind. They are founded on Revelation and science, and convey infinitely more sublime and just conceptions of the Almighty's power, wisdom, and goodness, than the confused and everlasting sameness of the employments of the blest which are generally entertained.

If the stars are not destroyed at the last day, and are to have no connexion whatever with it, as we have many reasons to believe, then they shall remain unchanged, when that time shall be past, and when this globe is altered from what it now displays on its surface, and while all its inhabitants shall have entered upon a new state. We may then, very probably, be endowed with a power of visiting the worlds of the sky ; of admiring their scenery, people, and natural phenomena ; of residing for a time in any of them we may incline ; and we may be sent on messages to them, as the angels of God were to this world in the earliest ages ; and, indeed, may be so still, although they are unseen,—from our eyes, in their natural state, being incapable of observing them.†

When we consider the vast number of those stupendous globes which we now see but as so many points of light, we

\* Discourse on the Happiness of Separate Spirits.

† Thousands of witnesses may surround us, observing our conduct, and directing events according to the orders they may receive from on high ;—standing ready at death to guide our souls to their appointed places in the middle state. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us."—HEB. xii. 1.

shall be sensible what an extensive field of sublime investigation is spread before those higher orders of beings who can traverse the universe. Were we in a future state allowed to examine the wonders of those other worlds whose rays we can now only catch a glimpse of as they faintly penetrate to our eyes from an inconceivable distance, what objects of delightful investigation must they prove ! what subjects of praise to their Creator throughout all eternity ! A hymn of adoration to his greatness, goodness, and skill, arose from the heavenly beings who witnessed the creation of this sub-lunary ball—"when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy !" —We, too, may also witness the creation of worlds yet to be formed, and join the choral voice of praise as they rise into existence and are peopled. What are the pleasures of voyages of discovery here on earth, although among the loveliest of her Indian or Pacific islands and countries,—or travels through the busy kingdoms of more civilized life, compared with the rapture and astonishment which we might experience in an uncontrolled range among these shining worlds above our heads, and which surround the earth. The surprise and delight of Columbus, when, after a perilous and weary voyage, he first landed on what was then esteemed a new world,—and first gazed on its strange and beautiful productions, could have been little to that which we may feel while, in company with angels and spirits of the blest, we glide among the stars, those distant and heavenly islands of the universe.

In contemplating, now, the probable natures of all those great bodies, we can have no doubt that they are all formed of *matter* of some kind ; various, perhaps, in its appearance and quantities from what we see here on earth, but contributing to the purposes, the convenience, or support of their inhabitants, and proving that the same power and skill have been as wonderfully exercised upon them, as upon this world of our own. If the latter can show such an endless variety of scenery,—such beautiful and romantic prospects,—from the lofty and glittering icebergs and dreary wastes of snow within the frozen bounds of either polar circle, to the ever-



green forests and lovely savannas of the tropics ;—from the barren rocks and deserts where vegetation scarce ventures to dispute the power of the deadly cold of those regions where it reigns—to the fields where summer always shines, and clothes them with a luxuriance and profusion of flowers and fruit !—what sublime and magnificent natural beauties must those heavenly mansions display which God has with especial care prepared for the residence of his elect, whether of the earth, or now residents on any of the other globes that are performing similar yearly courses in the heavens to that of our own ! When there is scarcely a country on the earth that is not different in its natural productions,—in its general appearance,—inhabitants,—buildings,—and national character, we must also, from analogy, suppose, that in all the starry universe, each star (or world) differs from another, not only in glory, but in almost every thing connected with it, from this earth, or from any other residence of intellectual beings. We can scarcely at present imagine any different appearances of things from what we are accustomed to see or to hear of, as actually existing ; but a moment's reflection will convince us that this is no reason against their even now having been actually formed. What ideas could a Greenlander or an Esquimaux, for instance, have of the vegetable productions of the East or West Indies, and of the romantic beauties of Switzerland ? What notion could they of themselves ever form, of the almost countless species of delicious fruits of more favoured climes ? Could they ever even fancy the beauties of the vast variety of flowers of every colour and perfume with which Nature has decked the ground of countries whose description to these miserable savages must seem fabulous. When sitting in their huts formed of ice and snow, or in wigwams of drift wood and earth, devouring the raw blubber of a whale, or tearing to pieces the flesh of the walrus,—how could they picture to their minds, a king's palace and a royal entertainment in Europe ? The savage in his canoe of bones with skins stretched over them, or hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, could never dream of a line-of-battle ship, with more than

a thousand men, or of the thunder and lightning that lay at the command of her crew,—and yet all these things are upon the earth—on a single globe, which may be traversed by its inhabitants in every direction ! How vast may the difference then be between this world and the residence of our nearest neighbours in space !

“ Oh ! when the soul no longer earthward weigh’d,  
Exults towards heaven, with swift seraphic wing,  
Among the joys past man’s imagining ;  
It may be one to scan ’midst space display’d,  
Those wondrous works our blindness now debars,—  
The awful secrets written in the stars.”\*

Being admitted into the presence of God, or seeing him as he is, or face to face, may not necessarily imply even a change of *place*, but of *condition*. “ All beings are constantly and equally literally in the presence of God, to whom the whole universe is present, but all are not equally conscious of this.” “ His presence, to which they hope to be admitted, must mean the more distinct *communication* with him. The all-present God does not inhabit one place more than another ; but he will be more *manifest* to his servants, in their glorified state, than now : and this probably through the means of a change in their powers and faculties. A blind man may be close to some goodly prospect ; but since he sees nothing of it, it is the same thing to him whether he is present or absent.”†

Although one source of pleasure to the departed and at present disembodied soul is being *present with the Lord*, yet this does not establish that they are then to be in heaven, as if God’s blissful presence could not be in paradise as well as in heaven. It is indeed directly asserted by David to be visible in Hades, in a passage which beautifully illustrates the Omnipresence of the Deity. “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from thy presence ? If I

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\* London Literary Gazette.

† Scripture Revelations of a Future State.

ascend up into heaven, Thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, (*Sheol—Hades,*) behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall Thy hand lead me," &c.\* The Father may be said to be present in Hades, from being represented by the presence of the Son there ; who, being himself God also, is in fact the Lord whom the Scriptures allude to as the One in whose presence the souls of his servants were to be immediately on being absent from the body. There is great difficulty, when speaking of any of the Persons of the Godhead, in saying that either of them is *here* and not *there*,—present in one place and not in another ; but with regard to Christ, it should be remembered that He carried his human body with him, and must be supposed still to retain it, though in a glorified state. He having once assumed our nature, we cannot somehow divest ourselves of the idea that He is in a certain place, at least that his body must be so, which is nowise inconsistent with believing that his divinity is *conscious* of every thing passing throughout the universe, and that he can transport his Person as swift as thought. The idea of his being in a place, is in strict conformity to his own language. "Then Jesus said unto them, *I go my way*, and ye shall seek me . . . . . *whither I go, ye cannot come.*"†—"As long as I am in the world"—‡ "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." "I go away, and come again unto you."§

Archbishop Tillotson endeavours to explain what the Scripture means by seeing God *as he is*, and there may be nothing in the expression which renders it too deep and mystical to prevent us having a *general* explanation given to us, consistent with the truth intended to be conveyed, but *the real manner* in which this particular promise shall be fulfilled, can never be perfectly understood by man on earth, unless it be revealed to him from heaven ;—still, an approach

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\* Ps. cxxxix. 7—10. † John viii. 21. ‡ Ib. ix. 5. § Ib. xiv. 3. 28.

may be made towards it from what we find recorded for our instruction. This much may be reckoned certain, that it cannot be explained altogether in the way some religious visionaries have done, who imagine that we shall eternally look upon God rendered visible as he is. There are passages in Holy Writ, which allude to other modes of happiness in heaven, and the customary style of language used to express such mysteries in the times when these books were written, was often so metaphorical, that even those to whom it was addressed misunderstood it on several occasions, and it could seldom be taken in the literal sense. The explanation of the Rev. Prelate just named, will better illustrate this :—

“What is meant by *seeing God*? The schoolmen have spun out abundance of fine cobwebs about this, which, in their language, they call the *beatific vision of God*, and they generally describe and explain it so as to render it a very dry and sapless thing. They make it to consist of a perpetual gazing upon God, and contemplating the divine essence and perfections, in which, as in a clear mirror, they suppose men to see and know all things. But this is a very jejune and insipid notion of happiness.”—“The schoolmen who were addicted wholly to contemplation, would have the happiness of heaven to be in that which they themselves took most delight in. But surely the Scripture understands something more by *the sight of God*, than a bare contemplation of him.”—“This expression primarily and immediately denotes our perfect knowledge of God in the other life, in opposition to those obscure and more imperfect discoveries and apprehensions which we have of him in these earthly bodies. For I think we need make no doubt but that sight is here taken in a spiritual sense. We are not to dream that we shall see God with our bodily eyes, for being a pure spirit, he cannot be the object of any corporeal sense: but we shall have such a sight of him as a pure *spirit* is capable of, we shall see him with the eyes of our minds and understandings. And in this sense, we do in some degree see God in this life, by faith and knowledge, but it is but

*darkly.* When we come to heaven, our understandings shall be raised, and cleared to such a degree of strength and perfection, that we shall know God after a far more perfect manner than we are capable of in this state of mortality. And this perfect knowledge of him, together with the happy effects of it, those affections which it shall raise in us, and that blessed enjoyment of the chief good which we are not able to express, is that which is called *the sight of God.*” —“The Apostle tells us, ‘that his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen *by the things that are made.*’\* And thus we do not see God immediately and directly, but by a reflection of his perfections from the works of creation and providence.”† —“We see him now many times *as he is not*; that is, we are liable to false and mistaken conceptions of him; but then *we shall see him as he is.* The clearness of our knowledge will free us from all error and mistake about him. But we are now many times at a loss what conceptions to have of God; we are hard put to reconcile one perfection of God with another, and to make them consistent and agree together. We believe his providence, but we are puzzled many times how to make that accord with his goodness and justice: but in heaven we shall see the harmony of all these, and that it was nothing but our ignorance which made us imagine any disagreement in them.”‡

Although our being afterwards made better acquainted with the works and designs of the Almighty, and being able to discover the reasons of his particular providences, may in so far be said to be seeing God as he is, yet the Scriptures do seem also to point to something beyond this, and there may not be that physical or spiritual impossibility in it which Bishop T. appears to think. True, our present bodily eyes are not adapted for viewing any spiritual being, but who can tell what powers our glorified bodies shall receive. Be-

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\* Rom. i. 20.

† The Apostle seems clearly to be only speaking in relation to *the present* life, not with respect to the next. We may here sometimes have false ideas of God, but we may be said to see him in his works.

‡ Tillotson's 1st Sermon on 1 John iii. 2.

sides, separate spirits must surely be able to see each other as well as be able to converse, and even men have been enabled to behold them, as in the case of the Transfiguration ; God himself, on different occasions, did assume a mysterious mean of visibility. Mortal men may not be able to sustain a sight of the dread presence of God as he is, (or with his glory unveiled,) and live ; but when our present frames shall have put on immortality, the spiritual nature of God may at times be manifested to us. The Holy Ghost, which is more incomprehensible to us than even the natures of the Father and Son, was in some degree seen to descend on the heads of the Apostles, under the appearance of flames of fire, being heard also in its passage like the sound of “a rushing mighty wind.” There can be no doubt that in heaven we shall see our blessed Saviour as visibly and distinctly as his disciples saw him on earth, and although the fashion of his countenance will be altered, shining above the brightness of the sun, as even on earth it was at times seen to be, yet we too shall then be glorified in our bodies, and their powers consequently proportionably increased. It is even with great reason believed that the Three Persons in the Trinity, each as an Individual, assumed the forms and bodies of three men, appearing to Abraham, conversing and eating with him ;\* and why should this be thought extraordinary, when one of Them spent thirty-three years on earth as a mortal man ? We have also divine intimations which induce us to think, as already noticed, that our Lord will in some manner appear as the Head of his Church in *Hades*, before that sublime spectacle of his coming to put an end to the present order of things both there and on earth.

Bishop Hobart, in contrasting our knowledge here and hereafter, shows how probable it is that all the dispensations of providence over which such a dark cloud now hangs, will yet be made plain to us, and be proved to have been wisely and mercifully ordered. “How often do the elements of heaven or the injustice of man blast the labours of honest

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\* See Bates' *Critical Hebrew*. Article *Malak*.

industry ! How often is the cup of felicity raised to our lips—and dashed away ! How often does a parent, the support and guardian of a loved child, or a child, the solace and delight of a revered parent, sink into an unexpected grave ! How often does death pluck from the embraces of affection and friendship those, whose piety and talents, shining with intense and pure ardour, engaged for their possessors universal love, and qualified them extensively to dispense happiness ! Alas ! while in bitterness we mourn under these dark visitations of providence, it is faith only which teaches us the lesson of resignation to that Being who rules over all, but whose counsels and purposes we ‘know only in part.’

“But faith reveals the consolatory assurance, that the period will arrive when we shall ‘know, even as we are known.’ In that perfect state of existence on which we shall enter when we have passed this probationary scene, the darkness which covered the dispensations of providence will be dispersed.”—“Then the false suspicions and the secret murmurs which we may have directed against God’s government of the world will be silenced before the glorious exhibition of his holiness, his justice, and his mercy. Then the prosperity of the wicked, the success of the unjust, the triumphs of the oppressor, will appear to have been permitted for purposes infinitely more wise and benevolent.”\*

While some contend, in one way, for our seeing God in a future life, and some in another, it is not improbable to conclude, that it shall not be in one manner only that we shall then behold him. As our eyes shall be invigorated and adapted to view the bright glories of heaven, so may they also be permitted to look upon the manifestations of Jehovah’s presence, which on earth would have been fatal to our mortal life. A direct and unobscured sight of the Divine Majesty may at times be vouchsafed to the glorious inhabitants of heaven, although it may not be always in

their view. But his power, wisdom, and beneficence must always be reflected in resplendent glory from his works which we shall there behold, and the enlarged and open revelations of what is at present (particularly here on earth) involved in darkness, will then well deserve to be called seeing God as he is. To understand such manifestations of his guidance in this light, is agreeable to common language from the earliest times. Job exclaims—"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now my eyes see thee : " that is, (as Bishop Tillotson explains it,)—"he had a more perfect and clear discovery of God and his perfections, than he had ever had before." Misfortunes had brought him to reflect more on the power of God,—to throw himself upon his mercy,—to contemplate his nature, and reverence him more than he had ever done in prosperity, although his devotions even then had called forth the approbation of the Lord, but he became sensible that, during the days of his uninterrupted greatness and success, he had been in some degree less contemplative of the Divine Being, and less conscious of his dependence on him than what misery showed him. Shakspeare makes Hamlet say that he saw his deceased father, and on being asked *where*, (since no ghost was visible to the inquirers,) the prince replies,—“In my mind’s eye, Horatio.”

How great a delight must it be in heaven to associate with all those great and good characters of whom we read,—to listen to their wisdom, and of what happened in their days, now but imperfectly, and sometimes but obscurely or falsely handed down to us.\* To learn the reasons which

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\* When Sir Walter Raleigh was confined in the Tower of London, he wrote a History of the World, and, as was to be expected, at times felt considerably embarrassed by conflicting testimonies, particularly in ancient authorities. One day a disturbance between some brawlers took place beneath his window, and he inquired into the cause and result of the quarrel ; when he received, from several different people, accounts which disagreed with each other. On which he exclaimed—"How can I expect to learn the exact truth of those events which happened ages ago, when I cannot ascertain the facts of a transaction which has just occurred under my window !"



influenced their conduct, and the long hidden causes which led to the events and incidents of their lives. To dwell with them where every evil is removed, and holiness and virtue adorn those who shall bear us company, ourselves fearing no pains, misfortunes, or death—where scenes of new and inconceivable sublimity shall appear at every step, and where boundless prospects are seen at every change of place !

From the manner in which the Rev. Dr. Edwards speaks, in his *Theologia Reformata*, of “the state of glory,”—“heaven,”—and of the “damned,” he had evidently no clear ideas of the separate state as distinguished from heaven. What he says in the following passages, alludes exclusively to the former, but we may here use it with propriety as an introduction to a consideration of the question, as to whether we shall be able to recognise each other in heaven as the individual persons who were here acquainted ; and if *disembodied* spirits know each other in Hades, more surely shall they do so when their revived bodies are reunited to their souls ; for, however, *altered* these may be, there can be no doubt but that we shall be able to distinguish those whom we knew in this life.—“It is reasonable to believe that the saints shall know that they had such and such a relation to one another when they were on earth. The father shall know that such a one was his child ; the husband shall remember that such a one was his wife, &c. The ground of which assertion is this, that the soul of man is of that nature that depends not on the body and sense ; and therefore, being separated, knows all that she knew in the body.”—“So that the delights of conversation are still continued in heaven. Friends and relations are familiar with one another, and call to mind their former circumstances and concerns in the world, so far as these may be serviceable to advance their happiness. The truth of what I say concerning this knowledge and remembrance of things in the state of glory, may receive some confirmation from that history in

Matthew,\* where we read, that in that glorious interview, which was a glimpse of heaven, the Apostles knew Moses and Elias."—"Much more, then, shall those spirits who were intimately acquainted with one another on earth, retain their acquaintance and converse in heaven, and call to mind the passages of their lives. But there is irrefragable proof of this in Luke. Abraham said, 'Son, remember thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things.' And it is as true that Lazarus *remembered* him at the same time. Whence I gather that the knowledge and memory of things done here remain hereafter. And particularly that the damned know and remember that they have relations on earth,† is evident from the rich man's being concerned for his father's house and his five brethren. It is not to be questioned, then, that the blessed likewise call to mind those who were related to them, and that they are concerned for their good and welfare; and when they meet them in heaven, greet them most kindly, and hold commerce with them, and recal the passages of their former conversation. All the ancient and pious fathers agree in this."

Shakspeare, in his play of King John, has introduced a mother, while lamenting over her dead son, thus expressing her hope of meeting him again in a future state:—

"And, father Cardinal, I have heard you say,  
That we shall see and know our friends in heaven:  
If that be true, I shall see my boy again!"

This part of my subject has been treated of at considerable length in a separate work by Mr. Muston. The conclusions, therefore, to which this learned author has come on this point, must be well worthy of our attention; particularly in opposition to hastily formed opinions by those

\* Chap. xvii. 3, &c.

† Properly speaking, souls cannot be said to be *damned* until after the judgment, although they may be very miserable and tormented from the expectation of it.

who think themselves qualified to decide on the subject, without having previously given it any particular attention. Mr. M. observes, that—"the permanence of the intercourse which will be maintained amongst the inhabitants of heaven, is another circumstance that must greatly contribute to the pleasures which will flow from the reunion of Christian friends in another life."—"Many imagine that the recollections which the conscious reunion of the faithful supposes to subsist in another world, involve the present subject in insuperable and irreconcilable difficulties. Memory is, indeed, not always favourable to the character and happiness of man. If the retrospect of past times present to his notice some spots that are agreeable, and even luminous to the eye, there are others which are darkened by the clouds of sin and sorrow. There are remembrances and associations which he would banish from his mind, having ever found them to be unfavourable to his peace and moral progress. And the full extension, therefore, of consciousness into eternity, is by very many concluded to be, of necessity, incompatible with that state of perfect purity and happiness which is promised to the heirs of immortality.\* If this

\* "And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." Matt. viii. 11.

Our Lord was clearly referring here to what was to happen at the resurrection on the last day, which is confirmed by the verse following, and the kingdom is that of the Father, not of the Son, as the latter then is to give up his separate dominion unto the Father. "In this interesting description of future felicity," remarks Mr. Muston, "the Saviour has expressed himself in terms which scarcely amount to any thing short of the plain and unequivocal declaration of his mind on the certainty of future recognition. The happiness of the saints is represented under the emblem of a festive scene, and the point of allusion which deserves our notice, and on which rests the evidence contained in the passage, relates to the gratification which guests of kindred sentiments find in the circumstance of being able to identify each other. Multitudes of strangers are to come from the four quarters of the earth, (Luke xiii. 29.) and are to 'sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.' Here is a special honour and felicity promised to them; and how can the declaration be realized, in any manner,

were really the case, it would be sufficient to meet the difficulty, by supposing a miraculous interposition on the part of the Deity, to efface entirely from the memories of the blessed all idea of past occurrences, which might be injurious to their character, or calculated to awaken any other than agreeable sensations.\* Assuming, however, what is far more probable, that they will possess the full power of reminiscence, we might ask, whether it is not reasonable to presume, that every objection levelled on this ground against the subject, derives its plausibility from the circumstance of overlooking the wide difference between their present and future conditions? It is surely neither irrational nor inconsistent with a becoming sense of human infirmity to suppose that the recollection of unwelcome events, when associated no longer with the fear of their recurrence, will have no other effect than that of increasing the gratitude of the redeemed, and enhancing the pleasures of heaven.”†

Even here on earth, danger and difficulties, when they are past, increase the pleasures of security and every thing going right with us : pain and suffering enable us the better to estimate the blessings of health and ease : poverty and hunger make us more sensible of the gift of a competence for ourselves and those dependant on us : storms make us value more the fine weather by which they are followed : and war, particularly if we are in the country subject to its ravages, shows us, in the most vivid manner, how thankful we ought to be in peace. If we stand on the shore of an

consistently, which does not imply the knowledge of these distinguished individuals?—In what other sense is it at all likely to be understood, by any persons, whose judgments are guided by the plain and unbiassed dictates of reason? And wherefore, indeed, should specific mention be made at all of the three illustrious patriarchs, but to intimate that they would be known to the numerous strangers to be associated with them, from the most distant parts of the earth.” *Recognition in the World to come.* p. 102.

\* Such innumerable breaks in the recollection of our former lives, as in such a case would appear to us, must render the recollection of our sojourn here below, little better than perplexing confusion whenever we thought of it.

† Recognition in the World to come.

unruffled sea, we do not feel the value of our situation so much, as if that sea roared in its fury, threatening wreck to the hapless mariners whose bark is tossed upon it. Travelers who have ascended to the tops of some of the highest mountains, as those of the Cordilleras, have described, having at times witnessed, the dark clouds covering the plains below, and the storm thundering far beneath them, while they experienced the most delightful weather under a cloudless sky, happy in escaping the tempest experienced below. But such comparisons are more suited to the state of those in paradise than to that of the denizens of heaven, which shall be a joy much beyond mere rest and security.

“*Here* the most wise and holy persons are but in the beginning of their existence, and often attach vast importance to circumstances, which, when they have attained in another world the maturity of their character and experience, will appear like the trifles of a day, or as the toys which are wont to engage the thoughts and affections of infants.”\*—Speaking in reference to a future state, an Apostle says, “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

“There is another alleged difficulty from the perpetuation of present consciousness, of a peculiarly solemn and plausible character,”—“the pain which, according to common apprehension, must, of necessity, accompany any knowledge which the righteous may hereafter have in regard to the doom of impenitent friends. This objection is often stated in some such terms as the following:—If the disciples of Christ are to meet, as it is contended, with the full recognition of each other in the world to come, does it not follow, as an obvious inference from the premises adduced in support of this welcome conclusion, that in many instances they must be aware of the absence from heaven of some who are now the objects of their tender and most affection-

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\* Muston.

ate solicitude. And since, more especially, individuals excluded from the mansions of heaven, will be known to be in a state of perdition and woe, can such knowledge possibly consist with that perfect felicity which is the anticipated and promised portion of every believer? What, (it is moreover urged,) is the voice of reason? What the current of human feeling,—the testimony of ever-recurring experience in reference to the question? Do they not all give in a verdict which is utterly at issue with the principles by which the advocates of perpetuated consciousness are accustomed to defend their theory—a verdict which does not rest upon some abstruse and speculative argumentation, but upon the broad and solid basis of undeniable fact? For, that the happiness of individuals, closely united by the bands of natural and reciprocal affection, depends much upon each other's circumstances, is one of the facts which is known and felt in every grade of society, and in every part of the habitable globe. How often does the loss, or the distress, of a near and beloved relative, fill the breast with sorrow, and deprive life of its enjoyments! And if they whose society and welfare are thus indispensably connected with our peace and happiness, should be for ever separated, and consigned over to the abodes of misery, must not the consciousness of their condition, should such be the event, embitter the pleasure of their glorified associates, and throw a dark shade over the brightest scenes of eternity? The sainted wife may surely thus have to shed the tear of unavailing sorrow over the object of her conjugal love, and the Christian parent may be doomed to carry into the regions of light and peace something of that feeling which agonized the soul of a pious monarch," as he mourned for his son Absalom.

"The above objection," says Mr. Muston, "which we have endeavoured to state in all its force, constitutes, perhaps, the main ground on which the notion of perpetual consciousness, is received by many with great hesitation, or altogether as visionary and incompatible with future blessedness."

How this effect of memory will be softened, or if it shall

be rendered nowise incompatible with the happiness of redeemed man in a blessed state, is more than we can answer at present, and it seems one of those mysteries attendant on the discussion of the subject, which it is impossible as yet fully and satisfactorily to explain. Even our Saviour represents the soul of the rich man, although suffering great pain himself, yet as being much interested in the welfare of his living brothers, and had he been happy in Hades, and they been miserable as disembodied spirits, he certainly would (we should naturally suppose) have felt the same interest in, and sorrow for them, as when they were alive upon earth, as they are said in the parable to have been. As living men, and in a state of probation, Dives knew that there was a possibility of an effectual and saving repentance in them, and therefore wished to exert himself for them, which he would not have done had that allotted time been past, and they in Tartarus, for he seemed to acquiesce in the hopelessness of his own condition, but had he been in Paradise, he might surely be supposed deeply to sympathise with their misery as disembodied spirits, however unavailing this pity might have been.\* We may reasonably infer, that the good spirits, therefore, feel this continued affection fully as much as the others, as it is a benevolent feeling. But it should be borne in mind, that it is not a *necessary* consequence that the same feelings shall continue *in heaven* which are felt in *the middle state*, for, in the latter, we are not to arrive at our full reward or state in which we are to be in for ever. What ideas and feelings may arise in us when the last change comes over us, none can say.

Mr. Muston has said much to remove the foregoing objection, and his arguments deserve great consideration, but it does not seem as if he himself had been fully satisfied

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\* We are surely entitled to argue in this manner, and draw these inferences from the parable, whether the two deceased men were intended as having been certain persons or not, if they *might* have been.

with them. I shall quote shortly, what he urges, apparently most to the point :—

“It is probable that the most pure and refined affection, of which the human bosom is the residence, contains some portion of earthly admixture, which will not enter into celestial happiness.”—“The aid of the instinctive principle is peculiarly necessary in social and domestic happiness, and it is here, therefore, that its power is especially felt and exhibited in those forms of tenderness, sympathy, and assiduous care which so much contribute to the harmony and happiness of the human family.”—“When the Christian is ‘as the angels of God,’ he must stand in a very different position from that in which he is at present placed towards his irreligious friends.”—“It should be remembered, that the righteous will hereafter be fully prepared to acquiesce in the perfect equity of the Divine conduct towards every impenitent sinner.”

It might be argued, that, as Nature has inspired every animal with a love of their offspring, (which in the brutes we term *instinct*,) evidently intended by an all-provident Creator as a means of their preservation in infancy, ceasing in the inferior animals when their young can provide for themselves,\*—so, in heaven, it may be that individual affection is less ardent, and we may consider all the redeemed—our fellow-saints, as equally entitled to our affection. But this is cold reasoning to the warm feelings of even Christian friendship, and the human heart, even of the best men, refuses to discard all hopes of eternal intimacy with those whom perhaps the natural dictates of friendship, of love, or of consanguinity here have led them to be deeply interested in. Let us, however, leave all this to be regulated by a God who himself has shown a tenderness to those feelings of affection which he has implanted in us,

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\* It is well known that in brutes, natural affection generally ceases towards their offspring when it is no longer necessary, and is succeeded by a manifestation of a quite different feeling, which drives the young ones to a distance, and on their own means, even where the parental attachment has been strongest.



and he can work by means of which we know not :—it is a difficulty to our comprehension here, but it shall be none hereafter.

St. John describes the felicities and glories of that state of happiness which we shall experience hereafter in heaven, as represented to him in a vision, but the language is so metaphorical, that it conveys in many places no definite ideas to us. He compares the manner in which the heavenly city is beautified, to the adornment of a bride ready to be brought before her husband, and says that God shall there wipe away all tears from the eyes of his saints,—there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things will be passed away. And there shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth. And there shall be no more curse ; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him, and they shall see his face.

The same Apostle says, that when Christ shall appear, (meaning at the last day,) “we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is,”\*—but it must be sufficiently clear that we should understand this expression in a restricted sense. A great and important change in our frames, in our faculties and dispositions, will doubtless be then effected ; but it would be impious presumption for us to aspire to a perfect equality with the Almighty. Our resemblance, in some respects, to that great and glorious Being will then be much nearer than it is at present, inasmuch as our souls will be purified, our affections sanctified, and our thoughts elevated, but however much our nature may be improved and perfected, still it must come far short of infinite perfection.

When reasoning regarding the sources of the happiness we shall feel in heaven, we can only speak in relation to that which our present senses can comprehend or feel. It is easy to understand the advantages and additional plea-

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\* 1 John iii. 2.

sure we might experience from an increase in the powers of any of those bodily senses which we possess, but we can have no idea of pleasures to be felt and to be communicated to us by a sense which we as yet do not possess, but it is very probable that some such shall be given to us along with the glorified body.\*

Even on this earth, and in our mortal frames, new and delightful sensations could be experienced by apparently the most simple means. A slight change in the constituent parts of the air we breathe, could effect this—and although we know it to be a fact, (for it has been experienced,) we cannot explain how air received into the lungs communicates almost ecstatic pleasure to the soul or mind—yet it is so; and when we come to consider it, there will appear little more of mystery about it than in the more common and better known fact, that various liquids taken into the stomach, produce nearly similar effects on the mind and spirits, and can raise to great exhilaration and happiness the joyous feelings of the soul. The juice of the poppy has a like power, and can cause the strangest phantasies of the brain or mental powers. It is well known that there are various sorts of air, entirely different in their properties, some of which are very wonderful. The kind alluded to above is called the *protoxide of azote* or the *nitrous oxide*, on inspiring which, a very considerable degree of pleasure is experienced through the whole frame, which feels, as it were, more buoyant, while the spirits are raised to an intoxication of delight, even beyond what is produced by wine, without its subsequent bad effects. After a few inspirations of this gas, a person making the experiment, feels, to use a common expression on the occasion,—as if

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\* “Besides those several avenues to pleasure which the soul is endowed with in this life; it is not impossible, according to the opinion of many eminent divines, but that there may be new faculties in the souls of good men made perfect, as well as new senses in their glorified bodies. This we are sure of, that there will be new objects offered to all those faculties which are essential to us.” Spectator. No. 600.

he was in heaven, and it is familiarly known by the name of *the laughing gas*. It is mentioned here merely to show how easy, and by what apparently simple and natural means, pleasure *may* be communicated to us either in the middle state or in heaven, independent of the mental satisfaction arising from other sources.

In whatever way we shall pass our time in heaven, we may rest assured that it will not be in inactivity or indolence, and our employments shall be our unspeakable pleasure, being every way suitable to the glory and happiness of that state, and as much above the noblest and most delightful employments of this world, as the perfections of our bodies, and the powers of our souls shall then be above what they are here. In a word, our happiness shall be such as is worthy of the great Sovereign of the universe to bestow upon his faithful servants, and infinitely beyond any reward which their own merit or services could have deserved. Thither shall our Redeemer conduct us, when he shall come in divine pomp and power in the midst of his thunderings and his lightnings, Himself more awful and dazzling than they;—then shall those follow him whose names have been found written in the Book of Life, and placed on his right hand, to enter into the highest celestial mansions—into perfect happiness, as complete and perfect beings. Our sources of delight have been shown in the preceding pages to be capable of great variety, and very different, in all probability, from the unceasing sameness figured to themselves by some. They will assuredly be ever new in an endless succession of ways, but all tending to manifest the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, rising in ever-fresh incentives to praise him as the Fountain from whence all these “rivers of gladness” shall flow.

Although what has now been said of the expected pleasures of heaven, be in some degree conjectural, yet it will also be noticed, that these conjectures are strongly, nay sometimes *strictly* founded on what has been revealed, and

from that knowledge of the universe which it has pleased God, by slow but progressive steps, to allow and assist us to acquire. The fairest and ~~most~~ most reasonable inferences are drawn from those texts which have been referred to, and from the well-grounded idea that the knowledge we may acquire in this world of the works of God, will not be forgotten or useless in an after state, when other things are remembered, or as if there were also no material wonders of His power to be shone upon by the glorious light of heaven, for the admiration and delight of its inhabitants. We may rest assured that it is not this earth alone which has been beautified with lovely or magnificent scenery, and with innumerable wonders of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, but that the heavenly residence which we hope yet to inhabit, shall display before us objects more noble and sublime, though not less real and substantial than those to which we are now accustomed.



## CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Situation or Locality of Hades; also of the Highest Heavens, as the region where the glory of God is more immediately manifested, and where the souls of good men, reunited to bodies, are to abide in felicity for ever, after the judgment of the great and last day of this world.

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“ Can you comprehend whither the soul goes when disentangled from the body ?  
If you can give me information on this topic, you will confer a favour upon me.”  
Body and Soul.

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THE subject of this Chapter is not one of mere curiosity and unprofitable study ;—it is absolutely necessary to be investigated in as far as relates to Hades, in order, if it be possible with our limited knowledge, to reconcile some passages of Scripture with each other.

*Hades*, or the general name for the middle state of residence of disembodied spirits, is represented as the place of *all* the departed *before* the day of judgment, and is said to be *below the earth*, when reference is made to its *tartarus* ; which might perhaps be supposed to be so situated,—but then its *paradise* is also in the same general place, and yet it is often spoken of as *above the clouds*, and, in some instances, paradise is called a heavenly residence, although not the third or highest heavens, from which Holy Writ, as before pointed out, always makes a clear distinction, when referring to the *present* abode of human separate spirits.

The ancients had no idea of the real shape of the earth, nor, consequently, what must be the locality of a place

which, in common language, we would call beneath its surface. The best informed among them merely meant, by the expression, that no one knew where Hades was, and that therefore it must be somewhere beneath the boundless plain which they inhabited.

All these seeming inconsistencies are capable of being reconciled, with nearly every scriptural description, as well as with our modern knowledge of the universe. Even were the question one of curiosity alone, it would be a very natural one, and one which there could be no impropriety in endeavouring to gratify. It has occupied the attention of many wise and good men, and those who have neglected it, are generally led into glaring contradictions when they speak of the state of the dead.

Although the Almighty has chosen to conceal, in his scriptural revelations, where the mansion is situated to which the soul directs its unseen flight when the body is laid senseless in the grave, we may surely be allowed to *conjecture*, without being deemed presumptuous, or without such a speculation being accounted uninteresting. If all knowledge was to be deemed unnecessary or unprofitable, but what is to be found in the Bible, it would be shrinking from acquiring what God evidently intends us to receive—a gradually increasing knowledge of his wonderful works, and of the secrets of nature. Whether faster or slower the progress at particular times may be, man seems destined to go on adding to his acquirements in science ; so it is impossible to say that the time may come when he can learn no more.

Dr. Chalmers, in his exposition on the text which speaks of a new heavens and a new earth, begins by observing, that “there is a limit to the revelations of the Bible about futurity, and it were a mental or spiritual trespass to go beyond it. The reserve which it maintains in its informations, we ought to maintain in our inquiries—satisfied to know little on every subject, where it has communicated little, and feeling our way into regions which are at present unseen, no further than the light of Scripture will carry us.” This

passage, at a first perusal, might seem to be a recommendation to abstain from all knowledge but what we find clearly detailed in the Bible. To assert that it were a trespass to go beyond it, is a mere gratuitous assumption, unfounded on any rule of conduct therein left for our guidance. Since God has inspired the human mind with a strong desire for acquiring knowledge of all kinds, why should we abstain from investigating any point because it is not distinctly communicated in the Bible? and when we are not commanded to abstain—why should we not study to learn every thing which we can on so very important a subject? But the latter part of the passage referred to, carries a different meaning to different people, according as each may interpret—"how far *the light of Scripture will carry us.*" Dr. Chalmers himself explains this, in what immediately follows, (already quoted,\*) in a much more liberal sense than what otherwise it might be held to imply.

Most people think that not attempting to be wise beyond what is written, means decidedly—not beyond what *they themselves* can understand; but such commentators should remember, that what may appear to convey little or no information *to them*, may be shown by another to disclose a great deal, and Dr. Chalmers does accordingly draw a very luminous and highly instructive explanation from his text on several points, as well as pious and natural ones regarding the future place of residence for the just, in so far, at least, as to its being a *material* place.

The situation of Hades has ever been a mystery which God has not thought it necessary directly and explicitly to unfold to man, but as knowledge of the universe increases—a knowledge which proceeds from Himself, in whatever way we may acquire it, we may be allowed to take advantage of modern discoveries relative to the distances, sizes, and positions of the different bodies which we see in the vast

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\* See p. 428 of this work. "But while we attempt not," says Dr. C. "to be wise above that which is written, *we should attempt, and that most studiously, to be wise up to that which is written.*"



concave of heaven all around the earth, to try if we can thus throw a little more light than the Scripture affords us on the question to be discussed.

It is, no doubt, sufficient in ~~the~~ sense, that there is such a place so designated in the Scriptures,—that we learn it is one of rest and pleasure for the good, and of painful remorse and perturbation to the wicked ; but if we wish to understand the whole Scriptures regarding it—to be able to reconcile their apparent contradictions, too readily laid hold of by the infidel and scoffer,—then we must search more deeply. We see in Holy Writ that neither the Prophets nor Apostles had any communications on this point, and therefore they generally adopted the commonly received opinions of their fellow-men, which supposed it to be *under the earth*, little imagining, apparently, at the same time, that the world was a globe revolving on its axis, and flying with amazing velocity through space in a certain determinate circle or ellipse round the sun. Allowing the divine origin of the Book of Genesis, it must be admitted that it was not intended to teach the Jews systems of philosophy, but the laws of life and morals ; and a great man and an exalted Christian raised his voice two centuries ago against this mode of applying, and often of wresting the sense of the Scriptures, to make them conformable to human fancies ; “from which,” as Lord Bacon observes, “arise not only false and fantastical philosophies, but heretical religions.” If the Scriptures are to be in some instances literally interpreted, and to have systems of science founded on them, Galileo merited his persecution from that dreadful tribunal the Inquisition, and we ought still to believe that the sun moves round the earth, while the latter is at rest in the centre of the universe ; and that the stars, ~~contrary to the~~ laws of all matter upon earth, do not look smaller at a distance than they really are, but if they fell, would cover the surface of the ground like a shower of hailstones !

We are not called on, therefore, to continue, in these our enlightened days, the belief of former times, that the earth is a wide extended plain of unlimited extent, because God

did not communicate to his chosen people that it was a ball, or because some of the prophets spoke of it as a vast plain in conformity with common ideas, and very probably knew no better themselves. Had the truth been told by the inspired writers in regard to many things connected with natural science, they could not have been understood or believed, unless their disclosures had been preceded by a great deal of preliminary knowledge, which God reserved for later ages and more enlightened times.

In Bishop Horsley's 39th Sermon, he commences with some remarks to the same effect:—"Nothing hath been more detrimental to the dearest interests of man,—to his present and future interests,—to his present, by obstructing the progress of scientific discovery, and retarding that gradual improvement of his present condition which Providence hath left to his own industry to make; to his future interests, by lessening the credit of Revelation in the esteem of those who will ever lead the opinions of mankind,—nothing hath been more contrary to man's interests, both in this world and in the next, than what hath too often happened, that a spirit of piety and devotion more animated with zeal than enlightened by knowledge in subjects of physical inquiry, hath literally taken the side of popular error and vulgar prejudice; the consequence of which must be an unnatural war between Faith and Reason, between human science and divine. Religion and Philosophy, through the indiscretion of their votaries, in appearance set at variance, form as it were opposite parties. Persons of a religious caste are themselves deterred, and would persuade others from what they weakly deem an impious wisdom; while those who are smitten with the study of nature, revile and ridicule a Revelation which, as it is in some parts interpreted by its weak professors, would oblige them to renounce their reason and their senses, in those very subjects in which reason is the competent judge, and sense the proper organ of investigation."—"In whatever relates to *religion*, either in theory or practice, the knowledge of the sacred writers was infallible as far as it extended."—"But in other sub-

jects, not immediately connected with theology or morals, it is by no means certain that their minds were equally enlightened, or that they were even preserved from gross errors. It is certain, on the contrary, that the Prophets and Apostles might be sufficiently qualified for the task assigned them, to be teachers of that wisdom 'which maketh wise unto salvation,' although in the structure and mechanism of the material world they were less informed than Copernicus and Newton, and were less knowing than Harvey in the animal economy."

Although still we are acquainted with only the ground work, as it were, of what is to be known, yet the information which we have and can depend on, will greatly assist us in the present inquiry, but it is also proper to endeavour to reconcile what modern philosophy shows to be true, with what appear to have been the ideas of the inspired writers, and to distinguish what they give us as direct revelation from heaven, from what they seem to have adopted merely from the common understanding of their countrymen at the time.

"Want of information and error of opinion in the profane sciences, may, for any thing that appears to the contrary, be perfectly consistent with the plenary inspiration of a religious teacher, since it is not *all* knowledge, but religious knowledge only, that such a teacher is sent to propagate and improve. In subjects, therefore, unconnected with religion, no implicit regard is due to the opinion which an inspired writer may *seem* to us to have entertained, in preference to the clear evidence of experiment and observation, or the necessary deduction of scientific reasoning from first principles intuitively perceived. Nor, on the contrary, is the authority of the inspired teacher lessened in his proper province by any symptoms that may appear in his writings of error or imperfect information upon other subjects."\*

The same author doubts, whether in those instances where the light of modern philosophy has undoubted reasons for

differing from ancient opinions on certain things relative to the material world, we may not in some degree misunderstand what the inspired writers really meant ; which is far from an improbable supposition.

The blind adherence to ancient opinions on points of philosophy, because they may *seem* to be sanctioned by some parts of the scriptural writings, is well exemplified by Washington Irving, in his *Life of Columbus*, while relating the celebrated conference between that great man and the most learned doctors in Spain, met to hear his reasons for believing the existence of America, or that he could reach the *East Indies* by sailing to the *westward*, owing to the rotundity of the earth ; and it may be useful for us here to consider the manner in which a new idea as to the system we are connected with was once received, and while we smile at the ignorance which led to this, let us take care that we do not imitate the old doctors alluded to, more nearly than we would wish to do.

“ At the very threshold of the discussion, Columbus was assailed with citations from the Bible, and the works of the early fathers, which were thought incompatible with his theory : doctrinal points were mixed up with philosophical discussions, and even a mathematical demonstration was allowed no truth, if it appeared to clash with a text of Scripture, or a commentary of one of the fathers. Thus the possibility of the existence of antipodes in the southern hemisphere, though maintained by the wisest of the ancients, was disputed by some of the sages of Salamanca, on the authority of Lactantius and St. Augustine. ‘ Is there any one so foolish,’ asks Lactantius, ‘ as to believe that there are antipodes, with their feet *opposite to ours* ; people who walk with their heels upwards and their heads hanging down ? — That there is a part of the world in which all things are topsy-turvy ; where the trees grow with their branches downwards, and where it rains, hails, and snows upwards ? The idea of the roundness of the earth,’ he adds, ‘ was the cause of inventing this fable ; for the philosophers having once erred, go on in their absurdities, defending one with

another.' Objections of a graver nature were advanced on the authority of St. Augustine. He pronounces the doctrine of the Antipodes incompatible with the historical foundations of our faith; since to assert that there was inhabited land on the opposite side of the globe, would be to maintain that there were nations not descended from Adam, it being impossible for them to have passed the intervening ocean. This would therefore be to discredit the Bible, which expressly declares, that all men are descended from one common parent." "To the simplest proposition of Columbus—the spherical form of the earth, were opposed figurative texts of Scripture. In the Psalms, the heavens are said to be extended over the earth like a hide, that is to say, like the covering of a tent, which, among the ancient pastoral nations, was formed of the hides of animals. St. Paul also, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, compares the heavens to a tabernacle or tent spread over the earth: hence these casuists maintained that the earth must be flat like the bottom of the tent."\*

The present question is one principally of scientific inquiry, on which Revelation, when properly interpreted, has not directly pronounced,—at least, not as to the precise situation we are in search of, although *the direction* in which it lies may be indicated, with some general description as to its nature, and our faith, therefore, is not called upon to adopt here any particular belief. An inquiry as to the situation of a certain definite place in the universe, must, of course, be founded on a true knowledge of the system of that universe, which we are now all satisfied that the ancients knew not:—at the same time that old opinions ought to have their due weight if not contradicted by undeniable facts since then discovered. Their general notion on this subject (especially what seems to be assumed by inspired writers) may even be strictly and scientifically correct, but in a quite

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\* Abridged Life of Columbus, pp. 39—41.

different way from what they imagined—a truth which this investigation may prove to us.

Let us now inquire more particularly into the nature of a residence for spirits, and what were the ancient notions of the situation of *Hades*, and how far we can make these notions agree with what we know to be demonstrably true in regard to our system, and to the more distant parts of creation ; premising, in so far, as to the locality to be contended for, that the most strict interpreter of Holy Writ shall have no cause to reject it on account of its being at variance with what we find written, although at first it may appear to do so, *toto cælo* !

Assuming that there is a middle state, wherein the souls of the dead reside in consciousness and individuality, it follows that this place must be situated *somewhere*. Both the Old and New Testaments speak of it as a certain determinate place, and it is characterised as one of *safe keeping* for all separate souls, while they remain so. It has been maintained that the residence spoken of for disembodied souls, is nothing but a state—a mode of being, respecting which it is impossible to form any distinct conception. Place, in the strict sense of the word, is, indeed, the relative attribute of matter, as it seems necessarily to imply extension and form, and whether souls can be so described, we know not. “But supposing the soul of man after death to exist in a disembodied condition, it must still, we conceive, have to place the relation of power or consciousness, and must, in this view, be limited to some part of the material universe, unless we suppose it to have the property of omnipresence, which is one of the exclusive attributes of the Supreme Intelligence.”\* We could form no conception of human souls being either *nowhere* or *anywhere*,—and it cannot admit of dispute that there must be a local habitation as well as name for their residence.

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\* Recognition in the World to come. p. 75. note.

“In reasoning upon this subject,” says Bishop Hobart, “the principle will be assumed, that with the existence of all created spirits, is essentially connected the idea of *locality*. They must exist in some *place*.”—“Whatever be its precise *situation*, there can be no doubt, considering it as *the general receptacle* of the souls of the righteous and of the wicked, that they exist there in *different conditions*; and in different regions of that unknown abode; the one in a state of happiness, and the other of misery.”

“The chief properties of spirits are knowledge and activity; and they are said to be present there where they have an immediate perception of any thing.”—“So our souls are said to be present with our bodies, because they have immediate consciousness or knowledge of what relates to the body, and they move it, and act upon it, or influence it in an immediate manner. God, the infinite spirit, has an immediate and universal presence; that is, he is immediately conscious of, and acquainted with every thing that passes in all the known and unknown parts of creation, and by his preserving and governing power manages all things. Finite spirits have not such an immediate and universal presence. Their knowledge and their activity are confined to certain parts of the creation.”—“If they are provided with any subtile etherial bodies, (which are called vehicles,) in and by which they act as soon as they leave flesh and blood, then they may properly be said to reside in these places where these vehicles are, even as our souls at present are said to be in a room, or a closet, or a field, because our bodies are there, in and by which they act.”\*

“In what part of space, or of what nature that receptacle is, in which the souls of men continue from their death till the body rises again, we scarce know at all; excepting that we are sure it is divided into extremely different regions, the dwelling of the righteous, called *Paradise* by our Lord,

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\* Dr. I. Watts' Discourse on the Happiness of Separate Spirits.

or *Abraham's bosom*, where Lazarus was ; and that of the wicked, where the rich man was."\*

"As the souls, at the hour of death, are really separated from the bodies ; so the place they are in, rest or misery, after death, is certainly distinct from the place in which they lived. They continue not where they were at that instant when the body was left without life ; they do not go together with the body to the grave, but, as the sepulchre is appointed for our flesh, so there is another receptacle or habitation and mansion for our spirits. From which it followeth, that in death the soul doth certainly pass by a real motion from that place in which it did inform the body, and is transported to that place, and into that society, which God of his mercy or justice hath allotted to it."†

The opinions of the ancient Hebrews, and of the heathens at large, concerning the place of the departed, are represented at length by Vitringa. A compressed statement of his detail of their opinions is given by Archbishop Magee.‡ That the souls of men, when released from the body, pass into a vast subterraneous region, as a common receptacle, but with different mansions in it, adapted to the different qualities of its inhabitants : and that here, preserving the shades and resemblances of the living, they fill the same characters they did in life ;—that this entire region was called by the Jews *Sheol*, by the Greeks *Hades*, and by the Latins *Inferi*. That these were the notions that commonly prevailed among the Jews, he conceives to be fully established by various parts of Scripture.

Dr. Campbell explains that—"the word *infernus* in Latin, comprehends the receptacle of *all* the dead, and contains both *Elysium*, the place of the blessed, and *Tartarus*, the abode of the miserable. The term *inferi* includes all the inhabitants, good and bad, happy and wretched. The words

\* Archbishop Secker.

† Pearson on the Creed. Article V. p. 236. Fol. ed. London, 1692.

‡ Magee on the Atonement. p. 346, *et seq.*



*infernus* and *infern* bear evident traces of the notion that the repository of the souls of the departed is under ground, which was the opinion of all antiquity. How far the ancient practice of burying the dead may have contributed to produce this idea concerning the mansion of the ghosts of the deceased, I shall not take upon me to say."—"In regard to the situation of *Hades*, it seems always to have been conceived in the lower parts of the earth, near its centre, as we should term it, or its foundation, (according to the notion of the Hebrews, who knew nothing of its spherical figure,) and answering in depth to the visible heavens in height.\* Unfathomable depth was always a concomitant idea conveyed by *Sheol*."†

While commenting on the phrase (as in our Bibles) of being *caught up* into paradise, the same learned author tells us that there is nothing in the original answering to the particle *up*. "The Apostle very properly employed here a word expressive more of the suddenness of the event, and of his own passiveness, than of the *direction* of the motion."—"In respect of situation, *expressions implying that Hades is under the earth, and that the blessed are above the stars, ought to be regarded merely as attempts to accommodate what is spoken to vulgar apprehension and language*. Of the like kind is the practice, so frequent in Holy Writ, of ascribing human passions to the Deity. The same may be said of what we hear of plants and trees in paradise, of eating and drinking in heaven, or of the fire and brimstone in either *Hades* or *Ge-henna*. We have no more reason to understand these literally, than we have reason to believe that the soul, when separated from the body, can feel torment in its tongue, or that a little cold water can relieve it."‡

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\* It will be remarked here that the expression of—*beneath the earth*, when referring to a place, would convey very different ideas on several of its characteristics and features to the ancients than to us who know that the earth is a ball, whose surface is all inhabited.

† Dr. Campbell's 6th Diss.

‡ Scripture is far from clearly rendering it impossible to believe that paradise is not beautified by a lovely vegetation, surpassing even the earthly Eden, and we can have no doubt that in whatever way it is adorned, it is a

Bishop Lowth remarks—"Observing that after death the body returned to the earth, and that it was deposited in a sepulchre after the manner which has just been described, a sort of popular notion prevailed among the Hebrews as well as among other nations, that the life which succeeded the present was to be passed *beneath the earth*, and to this notion even the sacred prophets were obliged to allude occasionally, if they wished to be understood by the people on this subject."\*

"From this *popular opinion*, arose the use of the word *descended*, in reference to the passage of Christ into the place of departed spirits."†

In a sermon on the descent of our Lord's soul into *hell*, Bishop Horsley makes the following observations on the locality of *Hades or hell*:—"It is evident that this must be some place below the surface of the earth, for it is said that he descended, that is, he went down to it. Our Lord's death took place upon the surface of the earth, where the human race inhabit; that, therefore, and none higher, is the place from which he descended: of consequence, the place to which he went by descent was below it; and it is with relation to these parts below the surface that his rising to life on the third day must be understood. This was only a return from the nether regions to the realms of life and day, from which he had descended, not his ascension into heaven, which was a subsequent event."‡ "The sacred writers of the Old Testament speak of such a common mansion in the *inner parts of the earth*,§ and we find the same opinion

very desirable place to remain in while our souls are without their bodies. Although it be impossible for disembodied souls to have fingers and tongues, as they have left these here, yet the above expressions regarding *heaven* and *hell* are not equally improbable, when we are to have material bodies there.

\* Lowth on Heb. Poetry. Vol. I. p. 163.

† Hobart's State of the Departed. p. 71. American ed.

‡ Horsley's Sermons. Vol. II. p. 162.

§ The literal meaning of the Greek expression merely signifies *beneath the earth*, below the foundations of it; modern writers generally render it *within the earth*, which they think comes to the same thing, but the conclusion we may arrive at as to the situation of Hades, requires that we graft no such modern acceptation on the original understanding.

so general among the heathen writers of antiquity, that it is more probable it had its rise in the earliest patriarchal revelations, than in the imaginations of man, or in poetical fiction. The notion is confirmed by the language of the writers of the New Testament, with this additional circumstance, that they divide this central mansion of the dead into two distinct regions, for the separate lodging of the souls of the righteous and the reprobate. In this, too, they have the concurrence of the earliest heathen poets, who placed the good and the bad in separate divisions of the central region. The name which the Hebrew writers gave to this mansion of departed souls, (without regard to any such division,) expresses only that it is a place unknown,\* about which all are curious and inquisitive.”—“The Psalmist says, (as cited by St. Paul,) ‘when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.’ ‘Now that he ascended,’ remarks the Apostle, arguing from the Psalmist’s words, ‘what is it but that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth,’ intimating that the ascending up on high of which the Psalmist speaks, is to be understood in reference to a previous descent into the lower regions, as it is opposite.” Bishop Horsley, however, in the same page, acknowledges that an ambiguity is thought to attach to the phrase of “the lower parts of the earth,” and tells us that in the Greek language, in which the Apostle writes, it is a periphrasis for *hell*, in the proper sense of that word, as the invisible mansion merely of the spirits departed.

Josephus, in his discourse concerning *Hades*, distinctly calls it “a *subterraneous region*,” (with the same meaning to this word as his countrymen attached to it, *beneath*,†) “wherein the light does not shine: from which circum-

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\* Thus, Bishop H. himself confirms the justness of the observation in the foregoing note.

† My readers will think that a rather incomprehensible distinction is attempted to be here made, as if it was impossible that a place should be *beneath* the earth, and yet not *within* it; but however paradoxical it may seem, *a priori*, such a place will be demonstrated to exist.

stance, that in this region the light does not shine, it cannot be but that there must be in it a perpetual darkness."\* If *Hades* was really such a place as here described, we would think it must be surrounded by at least the crust of the earth on all sides, which would certainly exclude the sun's rays; but it might have some kind of *phosphorescent* light of its own, as we know that there are subterraneous fires in the earth, but how *deep* they may reach is more than we can say. To speak of Hades as one involved in darkness, conveys a mistaken notion of it, when only *one division* or part of it is intended by the writer to be so represented. Josephus afterwards says that the gloom is only over the district on *the left hand side*, for on going to *the right hand*, he assures us, that the souls of the good are conducted into a region of *light*, and in order to be consistent with the further belief of his countrymen, he might have added, that those souls on the left could look into the other region, and distinguish what was doing there, as the rich man saw Lazarus.

Referring now to the foregoing explanations of the belief of the ancients, (Scriptural writers included,) and to the real meaning of the words they employed when speaking of the place of separate souls, it must be manifest that beyond a general idea and belief of its being *beneath* or *concealed from them*, we can gather nothing more from their information. We reside upon a ball-shaped mass of matter, rolling through space, just like the other planets over our heads. The ignorance in old times regarding the figure and size of the earth, led them to imagine *the shades*, as they denominated the general place for separate souls, to be somewhere *beneath* the surface of the earth, but not *within* it, and the notion has been so handed down and incorporated in our ideas of the place for our souls, that even yet we can hardly believe, that if we could go directly down through the earth to a certain determinate distance, we should at last

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\* Whiston's translation.

rise up from the ground among our fellow-men in New South Wales.

On our discovery of the earth's being a globe, it was said, the ancients must have meant that Hades was *within* it, since, in our minds, it is plain that they could have no other meaning to the word; but although it must be allowed that the ancients had no definite meaning beyond the mere *direction* in which Hades lay, the knowledge of the earth's being a ball must naturally have preceded any certainty of Hades being *within* it, and even if they had thought so, we could **not** on this account be expected to concur in their belief **more** than to believe that the world is one unlimited flat surface, and to give up the evidence of our senses when we see its *round* shadow on the moon in an eclipse, or withhold credit from the accounts of those who profess to have sailed round it.

Although we cannot take upon ourselves to pronounce with absolute certainty that the earth is not hollow; or be sure that it does not contain a vast cavern of souls; yet I cannot think it probable that even were our globe hollow, its inside is the Hades of the Scriptures, when the universe is without known limits, and holds millions of globes, thousands of times larger than ours, and regions beyond even the penetration of our most powerfully assisted sight. Some of our best informed geologists and learned men are of opinion, on most philosophical principles, that the earth *is solid throughout*, and it is worth while to give this point some consideration; but, as it is possible they may be mistaken, we shall not here absolutely assume it to be so.

A learned geologist, (Professor Knight,) who appears to have given great attention and research to the structure of the earth, informs us, that—"the greatest depth to which we have hitherto been able to go, whether by natural subterraneous passages, or the most laborious excavations in mines or otherwise, does not exceed three-quarters of a mile, or a twelve thousandth part of the diameter of the earth, and what is that to the distance which reaches from the surface to the centre, which, according to the nearest calculation, is

found to be nearly 4,000 miles ?"—“ While we are deprived, therefore, here of actual observation, the specific gravity of the globe has been ascertained by means derived from astronomical science. This result has given to the earth a mean density of nearly twice that of granite. A structure, to a great extent cavernous, is thus excluded. This inference is confirmed by some new discoveries.”\*

Mrs. Somerville also insists—“ it is beyond a doubt that the strata increase in density from the surface of the earth to its centre.”—Adding—“ This certainly would have happened, if the earth had originally been fluid, for the densest parts must have subsided towards the centre, as it approached a state of equilibrium ; but the enormous pressure of the superincumbent mass is a sufficient cause”—†

While some believe the earth to be solid, increasing in density towards the centre, others on less scientific grounds adopt the hypothesis, that the surface is merely the outer side of a thin crust, surrounding a nucleus of fluid ignited matter, and consider volcanic eruptions as owing to this central fire. Some distinct facts are stated to favour this idea ; as, that, the deeper we penetrate from the surface, the heat increases, and the number of hot springs of water which rise from great depths in almost all countries. Although volcanoes may owe their origin (as Sir Humphry Davy thinks†) to a deep seated cause, yet this would not prove that the whole earth is a hollow ball, for even were the crust fifty miles thick, or less, there might be cavities in it fully sufficient to hold the materials which may give rise to those irruptions which sometimes burst out in such awful grandeur both on the land and through the sea, forming volcanic mountains and islands, the latter of which have been seen in our own days to arise from the bottom of the deep ; as in the instance of the island called Sabrina near the Azores, and one which very lately was seen to form in

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\* Abridged from Dr. Knight's *Facts and Observations*.

† Mechanism of the Heavens.

‡ See this eminent man's last work—*Consolations in Travel*.

the Mediterranean, and to have disappeared again as suddenly.\*

Whether the central part of the earth is solid, an empty hollow, or one filled with fire, it would be almost equally impossible to reconcile the scriptural descriptions of Hades with such a situation. Were this state or mansion for souls, merely a sort of purgatory for their confinement, or purification by some unknown process, we could, (putting philosophical considerations out of view,) easily fancy the place not improbably in the centre of the earth, especially if we believed it hollow, and that though there was a constant influx, yet there was as constant an egress of souls bound for heaven. But if we were to believe as the Jews did, that they are all to remain in confinement there until the resurrection, and consider the vast numbers which have lived on earth and are departed from this life, and the multitudes which must yet descend to be confined there, we cannot help thinking, in common apprehension, that the place must surely become very *crowded*, if it is not so already, for the hollow of the earth could be but of a very limited extent for such an assemblage, even were the crust thin. This might be answered by saying that souls took up *no room* in space, by some incomprehensible method of packing; as a soul is present in a living body without our being able to discover that it occupies any space; but if they are imagined to be all conglomerated together, there can remain on our minds no idea of individuation among them, as we know there must be. This would be an approach to the absurd theory started by some ancient philosophers, (and it was confined to a small sect,) that the soul after death lost its individual existence and consciousness as a separate being, to be absorbed in *the eternal Mind or Spirit of the universe!* —both just and wicked souls thus becoming a part of the

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\* Several islands bear evident traces of having been thus produced in former ages, but of which origin no record remains, save that impressed upon themselves. St. Helena, Teneriffe, Madeira, *Ascension*, and many others, must have had their formation in this way.

Deity ! a supposition at utter variance with all traditional, reasonable, intuitive, or revealed knowledge or belief.

The difficulty is greatly increased, if we take into consideration that *paradise*, the light and happy region where the righteous souls are confined, is *in the same place*, generally speaking, with the other, for the Scriptures are uniform in so representing it, although there is a division which keeps each class distinct. It would be beyond all our conceptions of happiness, to suppose, for example, a party of disembodied souls enjoying themselves at their ease in the heart of a solid block of granite ; or another group of them tormented there in any way,—speaking to each other all the while, and looking about them, as if there was nothing in the way ! If the earth be a solid ball, and we believe all souls to be in it, it is evident we should bring the Scriptures with too good reason under the sneer of the learned infidel, and of all free-thinkers who endeavour to disprove the doctrines contained in these holy records ; for the inconsistency of our belief could be easily pointed out, whether we understood the earth to be solid or hollow. If its crust is only a few miles thick, then we are but a short distance from the region of souls, which Holy Writ repeatedly and strongly contradicts. It cannot therefore be *in* the earth, and if not, then this place must be *beyond it*.

We have reason to believe from the Scriptures, that the Paradise of Hades is a very glorious place, and that there is a direct intercourse there with angels, most probably even with our Saviour himself ; else there is seemingly no way of understanding some parts of the language of his disciples consistently with their words. Such ideas will not harmonize in our minds at all with a place *within* the earth. “ St. Clement seems to have thought the regions of the godly deceased to be a part of the *heavenly* regions, as the sanctuary was a part of the temple, and near the Holy of Holies. Some of the fathers, as St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, and others, stuck not to call the place of the separate spirits of good men by the name of *heaven* or *the heavens*, meaning, as it



appears,\* not the *adytum* or inmost apartment of the heavens, where the throne of the Majesty on high is seated, and the *unapproachable light* shines, but a heavenly mansion near it. Whence also the ancient Hebrews were wont to say of the separate spirits of the righteous, that they are under the throne of glory."†

Considering all these seemingly conflicting statements, how can we now form a rational belief upon this subject? Is it possible to reconcile them? A sceptic would be induced to pronounce that Hades was but a name, and, consequently, that all which is said of it in the Bible can have no real meaning. It has been said that souls, being *immaterial*, require no material habitation or residence to pass that time in, which is to intervene between death and the day of judgment; but it is more probable, even on the supposition of their entirely immaterial nature, that their mansion is in some degree material, than that it is not, since they have material dwellings while here; and it is far from impossible that souls have a body of a peculiar kind, though of a very different nature from those mortal ones which they use as instruments for communicating with this external world; but whether the habitation of disembodied souls be material or otherwise, it must necessarily have some locality, since ubiquity is an attribute of One alone.

With every wish to believe in the Scriptures, and the greatest reverence for their authority, it is necessary to know, in the first place, what doctrine or belief they really do inculcate. When we read there in one part, of Hades being the general place for all departed souls—that it is beneath the earth, and then when, on turning to another page, we find that the paradise of it is above the clouds, what are we to believe? How can they, in this case, be both in one situation, with merely a gulf between them, across which the inhabitants of each side can see each other and converse? If an unbeliever point out these seeming inconsistencies, as

\* See Ambrose de bono mortis, cap. 12. et eundem ad Michæan. Obs. 2.

† Bishop Bull.

proofs that the whole doctrine is impossible and fabulous, how are we to answer him? How are we even to explain to him the faith he ought to adopt as that in accordance with the Bible? It may not be possible, nor is it necessary for us, in every instance, to show how a scriptural assertion or doctrine can be minutely true, but we ought to be able to understand, as far as our capacities are capable of comprehending, what we are there called on to believe.

Since we cannot believe, then, that Hades is *within* the earth, let us look into the blue expanse which appears to surround us *in every direction*. If the place is *nearer* to this world than the very farthest telescopic stars which we can discern, and is *invisible* to us, or is actually an immaterial place within that space, then it must be so transparent as to allow us to see the stars shining directly through every part of it; and it cannot in that case even be of so aerial a nature as our atmosphere, else the rays from these stars would be refracted or bent in passing through it, beyond the regular bending on entering our own air, a circumstance which astronomers could not, up to this time, have failed in detecting. The supposition, then, of its invisibility, and yet of its being within the distance referred to, is exceedingly improbable; for there is no part of the visible heavens where the rays of the stars are either turned in the least out of their course, or intercepted for a moment, except by the bodies of other visible luminaries or their atmospheres.

Those most ignorant of the immensity of the system of the visible universe, will be most ready to suppose that *Hades* lies *beyond* all the stars which we can discern, but those who have some scientific though faint conception of their vast and by us immeasurable distance, will, I presume, be rather inclined to fancy that some one of the glorious and immense orbs which our eyes can see, may be this mysterious mansion.\*

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\* To give some faint idea of the remoteness of the fixed stars, it may be mentioned, that astronomers have calculated, on sure principles, that Sirius,

“It is a very natural inquiry,” says Dr. Watts,—“where are these places of blessed spirits? What part of the creation is it, in which they have their residence? Is it above or below the sun? Is their habitation in any of the planetary or starry worlds? Or are they fled beyond them all? Where is the proper place of their presence?”—“There must be some place where the glorified body of Christ is, and the souls of the departed saints are, in some sense, with him. There Enoch and Elijah are in their immortal bodies, and other saints who rose at the resurrection of Christ. They may be (for ought we know) in or among some of the planets, or among the stars.”\*

What reason can we have for supposing our spirits go to so incomprehensible a distance as beyond the stars? and how do we even know that there is a place *beyond* them? To the best of our knowledge, the universe is boundless, and it would be more incomprehensible to think how it could have limits, than to believe it has none. The more our glasses are made to magnify, stars rise into view beyond stars, in seeming interminable succession; but there may be some heaven of glory among them, far beyond what the telescope has ever discovered. There can be no doubt that the Almighty could have prepared a star within our view, and in every way have adapted it for the habitation of spirits, as easily as he formed this world for the residence of

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or the Dog Star, which seems to be the nearest to the earth, must yet be more than two millions of millions of miles distant from it. The earth is at one part of its orbit 190,000 millions of miles nearer this star than at another, and yet we perceive no difference in its size. A cannon ball flying from the earth, even at the rate of 20 miles in a minute, would not reach Sirius in 1,800,000 years! Sound, the velocity of which is 13 miles in a minute, would be more than 2,700,000 years in passing from hence to a star. The particles of light from the sun, which are the swiftest moving bodies we know, coming at the rate of 200,000 miles in a second, or to the earth in 8½ minutes, would be more than 3 years in penetrating through space to Sirius from the sun. So the nearest star might be kindled or extinguished for that time before we knew any thing about so great an event.

\* Discourse on the Happiness of Separate Spirits.

man and the inferior creation which move around us. The exact nature of the stars is beyond all our calculations, but this we are certain of: that there is nothing we are acquainted with to discredit the idea of their being great and glorious worlds, fit for the residence of souls or even of material bodies. Many astronomical discoveries lead us to suppose, that at least all the planets are inhabited by beings not very dissimilar from ourselves, since they have atmospheres, clouds, summer and winter, night and day, and move round the sun as we do, although in different times.

In judging on such matters, those who have given them no previous consideration, and are ignorant of what they ought to know, in order to be in some degree able to form an opinion, are generally those who have the least difficulty in deciding. If the conjecture be above their comprehension, they seek no better reason for its being worthy only of being ridiculed as absurd.

If our spirits after death go to any of the heavenly orbs of light whose rays reach our eyes, *perhaps our own sun may be the one destined to receive them during their separate state, and is at this moment the habitation of all the departed souls since the death of Abel.* Although we cannot in regard to the sun infer that it is inhabited, from being in any respect similar (as far as we know) to our earth, yet we are not at present seeking a habitation for similar beings to men, and it would be natural to suppose that the dwelling place of disembodied souls should in its nature be somewhat different from one intended for them while in active life in another state, and with material bodies. The sun shining by its own light, as all the fixed stars do, may be called merely the next star to us, and the light, heat, and power of gravity proceeding from it, and exerting their influence on the earth, show that we are more connected with it than with any other star. The sun, being the centre of attraction round which all the planets revolve, it *may* be (however improbable some may think it) that spirits assemble there from all of them to which its influence extends, to wait till the general judgment, which *may* include the inhabitants of these great bodies as

well as ourselves.\* “We are but one of many worlds ; and of these there are a few separated from the innumerable others, which are immediately and distinctly associated with us in one planetary system, and which revolve as we do around one common sun. The peculiar seclusion of these from all the rest, and the appointment of these only to be together, and their manifest combination into one system of being, apart from any other, and divided in space from every other by more myriads of millions of miles than we can easily calculate—are clear and certain indications, that we have some important relations with each other, which have not yet been ascertained.”—“Reason, in weighing all the probabilities of the case, inclines to the conclusion, that we

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\* May not our Saviour have alluded to the inhabitants of other planets, when he said,—“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd”?—ST. JOHN x. 16.

Although this text is commonly held to have been applied to those nations then denominated the Gentiles, yet if we are to take it in the same restricted sense as the ancients must have done, we must apply it to a very limited part even of our own world to what is now known, but there are few in our days who would not agree that our Lord had alluded to all the nations of this globe, since all are ultimately to worship the true God. Now, if all the worlds of the sky are inhabited, (or, let us contract our ideas in this instance to the planets of our own system) why may he not have had some of these in his mind at the time, since he must have been aware of the fact of his having worlds for worshippers unknown to man. We are too apt to consider our little earth as the only peopled globe in the universe.

“In this our first period of existence, our eye cannot penetrate beyond the present scene, and the human race appears one great and separate community ; but with other worlds, and other communities, we probably may, and every argument for the truth of our religion gives us reason to think that we shall, be connected hereafter.”—“It is not absurd to imagine that our fall and recovery may be useful to other orders of immortal beings as an example ; and that the divine grace manifested in our redemption may raise their adoration and gratitude into higher raptures, and quicken their ardour to inquire, with ever new delight, into the dispensations of infinite wisdom. This is not mere conjecture. It derives plausibility from many analogies in nature, as well as from Holy Writ, which represents the mystery of our redemption as an object of curiosity to superior beings, and our repentance as an occasion of their joy.”

and our fellow planets have more references to each other than are yet known ; and, consequently, that our earth is existing for some purposes with which they are interested, as they have also circumstances in their subsistence or destinations which as materially concern us.”\*

As the earth revolves round the sun in a slightly elliptic orbit, or, to speak with sufficient accuracy here, in a circle, it seems a more correct idea of *descending*, if we meant that our souls went to the centre, not of our earth, but to that of the system to which it belongs. The idea is much more sublime, and though at first the phrase of *going down* to the sun may seem an unusual mode of expression, yet when it is a little considered, it will be found correct in point of fact, and to have a more general meaning of going in one direction than those can have who only understand by it going towards the centre of the earth, to which every different people must go by a *different direction*. If a person at the equator, for instance, were to die at midnight, and his soul were to go to the centre of the earth, it would be then *nearer* the sun by 4000 miles, or half the diameter of the earth. Had the same person died at noon, then his soul, if it reached the centre of the earth immediately, would be the same distance farther *from* the sun. If one man died in Britain, and another in New South Wales at the same time, each soul must take a *different* direction to the centre of the earth, for they would *meet* there. At least, the direction each would move in would be different, when considered in relation to our solar system. Two people could not, even on the earth, be said to go in the same direction, merely because they should both direct their course to one object ; for the one might be going *north* and the other *south*, if they set out from *opposite* places ; and in voyages round the world, one ship sailing due *west*, and another due *east*, would at last *meet*. All these well known facts ought to show us, that we should reflect a little on the true meaning of the terms which we make use of, and in speaking of the flight of the soul, that we should

extend our ideas to what ought to be considered *up* and what *down* **beyond** this ball, on the surface of which we move about for a little while ; burying our “outward man” in it at last, as the caterpillars leave their **forms** which could not rise from the ground, while our souls, like the butterfly, wing their way, to live in another state of life.

If we could admit, then, that being on the circumference of the earth’s orbit, we might, on going to the centre of it, (which is the sun) be said *to descend*, then all the scriptural expressions to that effect *are strictly and astronomically true*, and no other place can be found in the universe which would be so literally **and correctly** downwards (from the earth) in an extended sense. Any place *beyond* our own orbit round the sun must rather be called *up* from the earth, and although, when the planets Mercury and Venus are directly between us and the sun, they might also be called *down* from the earth, yet they are seldom so situated in that exact position of their orbit. While we are here, the sun is as long *beneath our feet* as he is *above our heads*. The attraction of gravity is always said to induce bodies to *fall down*, **or** towards the attracting body ; now, the source of the greatest attraction is the sun, which exerts this power on the earth so strongly as to keep it from flying out of its orbit, which the centrifugal force with which it moves would instantly cause it to do were the **power** of the sun to cease for a moment.

I have now stated reasons for believing this great and glorious body, the Sun of our system, to be the residence of our spirits while in an intermediate state ; but I merely bring forward the idea as the most reasonable *conjecture* we can make, not as a fact which has been proved. I have long had this notion, and till lately considered it as *an original discovery*, but I have met with the very same fancy, and a reference to Whiston and King,\* who, it is said, also thought

\* “Mr. King, in 1788, published a dissertation on the sun, in which he advanced that we never discern the real body of the sun, **except** when we see its spots ; that the sun is inhabited as well as the earth, **and is not** necessarily subject to burning heat, and that there is in reality **no violent** elementary heat

that the sun is the abode of the blest gathered from all the planets of our system, but I have not seen their works where this is affirmed to be stated, and am not aware if they give any reasons for their belief.

Mr. Moore, in his life of Lord Byron says, that one of the earliest efforts of his Lordship's pen was satirizing a lady who believed *the moon* to be the place where departed spirits are residing. This luminary is, no doubt, much nearer us than the sun, and is probably a habitation for living beings also ; but the latter is by far the more likely temporary receptacle for our souls. It is vastly larger than the earth, while the moon is smaller,\* and the sun would answer our ideas of sublimity better, besides, that it is a much more mysterious place. We see the exact surface of the moon ; her mountains, valleys, and different reflecting parts ; but a dazzling glory surrounds the body of the sun. One of the most eminent of modern astronomers, Dr. Herschel, believed that the sun was inhabited, and that its real body is dark and solid, surrounded by two strata of clouds ; the outermost of which is the region and source of that light which is diffused from thence to the remotest parts of the solar system. If we suppose the inhabitants of the sun to be entirely *spiritual*, or of a different kind from all such matter as we are acquainted with, any objection from the heat vanishes were the sun itself even red hot. What kind of a globe it really is, we know not ; we are not even certain of it being hot or cold, although its rays produce heat on entering our

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existing in the rays of the sun themselves essentially ; but that they produce heat only when they come in contact with the planetary bodies.

Greig's *Astrography*, or the Heavens Displayed, p. 54.

The work referred to in the above, is noticed in the *Annual Register* for 1788, under the title of "*Morsels of Criticism, &c.* by Edward King, Esq." and a second part was published in 1800. See An. Reg. for that year, p. 228.

Dr. Herschel's theory of the nature of the sun, in which he states his reasons for believing this great body to be a magnificent habitable globe, was published some years after Mr. King's dissertation on the same subject.

\* The diameter of the sun is 888,000 miles, and his mass is more than a million of times greater than that of the earth. The earth is nearly 8000 miles in diameter, and the moon, 2160.



air, and striking on the earth ;\* but were this body ever so warm, we cannot certainly know how the *spirit* would be affected by comparison with the feelings of the body. The spots on the sun when greatly magnified and minutely examined, appear to be openings in a luminous atmosphere ; through these are seen a dark shade which is supposed to be a stratum of clouds within the brightness which is next to us : in these dark clouds an opening is also believed to be observed, about the centre of each of the spots, from a

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\* Although we know well the usual *effects* of heat, yet we are ignorant of its *cause*. It is produced in various ways, by chemical combinations, by compression, and by friction, as well as by rays from the sun. These last are invisible, and entirely different from the rays of light (or colour-making rays) as is found in the beautiful experiment of the prism. The heated rays come with greater force than the others, as they are less bent out of their course by the prism, and the particles are probably of a larger size. When many experiments prove that those rays which give out heat communicate it to different bodies according to the density and colour of these bodies, and remember that several cold fluids, (as sulphuric acid and water) produce heat on being mixed, it must appear nowise unlikely that the invisible emanations from the sun, instead of bringing their heat all the way from their source, acquire it by friction in passing through our atmosphere, or from admixture with it, and by being reflected from different substances, as many facts render probable. The heat from the sun's rays is always in proportion to the density of the air and the perpendicularity with which they strike. In the plain and in the valley it is much hotter than on the top of a mountain, which is often covered with perpetual snow, although nearer the sun, owing to the air being there so rare or light. A recent traveller relates that, in crossing the Andes in South America, "the sky above is one uninterrupted deep blue, and appears actually nearer the spectator than when he saw it from the valleys ; but the rays of the sun, although his orb is perfectly cloudless, *seem to possess no power of warming*, and give a wan sickly light like that of a full moon."—(*Campaigns in Venezuela*.) Those extraordinary meteoric stones which fall upon all parts of the earth, and are supposed with strong reason to come from lunar volcanoes, have uniformly a considerable degree of heat when they first arrive, and it is much more probable that they acquire this by the friction arising from penetrating through the atmosphere, or by the compressed air which they drive before them, than that they retain their heat throughout their vast flight from the moon or elsewhere. If these bodies are thus heated, why may not particles from the sun in a similar manner receive the heat we find in them, or which is produced by them, and their greater velocity may make up for their amazing minuteness ?

more intense degree of blackness there seen ; and this last is thought to be the body of the sun itself ; not that it is inferred to be perfectly dark, but only comparatively so, under the immediate comparison and contrast with the brilliancy of the outer part. The actual body or real surface of the sun being thus concealed from our observation, would therefore likewise answer every scriptural expression which refers to the mysteriousness and invisibility of Hades.

Dr. Brewster coincides in opinion with the late Professor Wilson of Glasgow, "that the solar spots are depressions rather than elevations ; and that the black nucleus of every spot is the opaque body of the sun, seen through an opening in the luminous atmosphere with which it is encircled."

Some of these spots are of a greater size at times than that of the earth ; they vary in extent and number, slowly contracting or dilating ; old ones closing up altogether, and new ones opening, which shows they must be in a moveable substance.

If it is possible that a star, or the sun, could be so adapted as a residence for spirits, which certainly would have been no more difficult for the Creator than it was to adapt the earth to be an habitation for men, *then there are chances equal in number to the stars, that one or more of them are so formed, and are actually so inhabited.*

"The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand ;

*The sun is peopled ;*"\*—

If any one who now derides the idea of the sun being the residence for separate spirits (yet admitting some place for them) will consider what reason he can discover against it, he will perhaps find his endeavours to start a substantial objection a more difficult attempt than he may have previously imagined. If he can give no reasons why it should not be believed, or that it is improbable, he is not entitled to call this theory either unfounded or unlikely. It cannot be said, for instance, that a place is too small for such a purpose, which is greatly more than a million of times larger

than the earth,\* and the agreement shown with Scripture, cannot be thought to be a forced one, if the change of place of any body from the circumference of a circle in which it was moving, to the centre of that circle, is admitted to be a *falling* or *descending*, (which, in the case of the earth towards the sun, cannot be denied,) as even in common language it is often called, and it would be an impious doubting of the Almighty's power, besides being unsupported by philosophy, to suppose that He *could not* adapt the sun to this end :—in short, although it be but a conjecture, yet it is not only *possible* to be true, but the most *natural* and *probable* one.

“ As men who long in prison dwell,  
 With lamps that glimmer round the cell ;  
 Whene'er their suffering years are run,  
 Spring forth to greet the glittering sun ;  
 Such joy, though far transcending sense,  
 Have pious souls at parting hence.  
 On earth, and in the body plac'd,  
 A few and evil years they waste ;  
 But when their chains are cast aside,  
 See the glad scene unfolding wide,  
 Clap the glad wing, and tow'r away,  
 And mingle with the blaze of day ! ” †

Slight indeed, and easily drawn aside, though impenetrable to mortal eyes, is the veil which conceals the spiritual world from the present. Death at once admits us behind the curtain, and then our spirits are removed to their appointed place in the Middle State.

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\* Mr. Bevan, in a communication to the Mechanics' Magazine, estimates that more than one million four hundred thousand such globes as our earth would be required to form one equal to that of the sun. Supposing this number of globes to be placed in a circular form in close contact, each globe to be 7,914 miles in diameter, they would occupy the circumference of a circle more than 3,530 millions of miles in diameter !

† Parnel.

The situation of the place called by the Jews the Third or Highest Heavens, where we shall reside after the reunion of body and spirit, and after the last day, is a more difficult conjecture than that of Hades.

We have no means of ascertaining in what part of the universe it is situated, but the ideas of men who have deeply studied the subject, will give us much more definite notions of heaven, than when we fancy it some vast aerial place of an indescribable nature, or listen to the declamations of pious, but, on this point, unfounded enthusiasm, which is often satisfied with *words*, if they sound well, instead of *meaning*.

Dr. Chalmers and some other writers, founding on St. Paul's expression of a new heavens and a new earth, in which the blest are to dwell as the place of their eternal happiness,\* believe that this our *present* residence is to be so changed and beautified after the last day, that it will become fit for the everlasting heavenly dwelling of the saints. There may be nothing impossible in this notion, if the place is not held to be inhabited and considered as heaven *already*, which some do, but still there are several considerations which render it very improbable. In the first place, the expression—"a new earth," &c. even when taken literally, by no means *necessarily* implies, our present one however altered, more than a *new coat* means an old one "renovated;" or that every new house must be built with the materials of an old one. A new earth and a new heaven, only indicate that *heaven* will be a material structure, and if we were transported to any of the heavenly bodies which we see in the sky, it would be a new earth to us,—a new solid dwelling, with a new atmosphere encircling it,—a purer air, perhaps, than what we now breathe, filling us with delightful sensations. The authors referred to, admit that we shall

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\* "That is, a world purified from physical and moral evil, and fitted to the renovated faculties of the redeemed, will be prepared in some part of the universe for the residence of the just."—Dick.

have material bodies in heaven,—now, if all who ever lived on the earth, and all who may yet do so, were to be again placed on it, it must be a necessary consequence that each individual would have exceedingly little room, unless the earth was made a much larger place. If the mansion which our Saviour announced to his followers that he went to prepare for them, be believed to be in that heaven into which he is to call them after the judgment, and not in the middle state, then nearly two thousand years have elapsed without any preparations being seemingly begun for converting this earth into the promised heaven, and several thousand more may follow. It does not give us a sufficiently magnificent idea of heaven, nor come up to the scriptural descriptions we read of it, and the very knowledge that we were dwelling above the ruins of our former country, would tend too forcibly to bring to mind former associations and remembrances which could not be pleasant.

These are, it must be admitted, in some measure but mere speculations, which must all give way if it were clearly said in Scripture that *this* earth were thus again to be rendered, not in one place only, but over its whole surface—a garden of Eden. But the expression founded on, will as naturally apply to any of the other planets, or to any great orb moving or at rest in the boundless expanse of heaven, either within or beyond the range of our vision. Were the earth the only globe we knew of, we might be led, from the words of the Apostle, to think it would be changed into a new and happier one for the just, to fulfil the prophecy; but when there are certainly worlds without number, of much greater extent, it is more probable that our heaven is either one of them, or some vast unknown material place. Some of Mr. Dick's observations on the locality of heaven combine knowledge of the universe, with plausible conjecture.

“If it be admitted,” says this author, “that the spirits of the just are to be reunited to *material* structures, it must also be admitted, that these structures must have some material world or habitation in which they may reside.”

“In reference to the *locality*, and the *circumstances* of

our future destination, there appear to be four or five suppositions that can be formed. . Either,

1st, The world we now inhabit will be new modelled after the general conflagration, and furnished as a proper place of residence for its renovated inhabitants ; or,

2d, Some of the globes now existing in other regions of space to which the holy inhabitants of our world will be transported, may be allotted as the more permanent residence of the just ; or,

3d, Some new globe or world will be immediately created, adapted to the circumstances of redeemed men, and adorned with scenery fitted to call forth into exercise their renovated powers ; or,

4th, The redeemed inhabitants of heaven may be permitted to transport themselves from one region or world to another, and be furnished with faculties and vehicles for this purpose ; or,

5th, After remaining for a certain lapse of ages in that particular world to which they shall be introduced immediately after the resurrection, they may be transported to another region of the universe to contemplate a new scene of creating power and intelligence, and afterwards pass at distinct intervals through a successive series of transportations, in order to obtain more ample prospects of the riches and glory of God's universal kingdom.

“In all these cases, whatever supposition we may adopt as most probable, the general laws which now govern the universe, and the general relations of the great bodies in the universe to each other will remain, on the whole, unchanged ; unless we adopt the unreasonable and extravagant supposition, that the whole frame of Jehovah's empire will be unhinged and overturned, for the sake of our world, which, when compared with the whole system of nature, is but an undistinguishable atom amidst the immensity of God's works. With equal reason might we suppose, that the conduct of the inhabitants of a planet which revolves around the star *Sirius*, or the catastrophe which may have befallen the pla-

nets Ceres, Pallas, Juno, and Vesta, must necessarily involve them in the destruction of the terraqueous globe.”\*

The illustrious Herschel discovered, in many parts of the heavens, milky appearances, or like small, faint luminous clouds at immense distances, and these, in the lapse of years, changed their shapes and brilliancy, sometimes appearing brightest in particular places. They are some of them found, on minute inspection, to be made up of stars in vast numbers, but others appear to be merely collections of light. “The most brilliant and remarkable of these is seen in the constellation Orion. It is not imagined that this nebosity arises from a region of stars which are collectively visible to us, even allowing the distance of such a collection to be immensely great, on any imaginable scale; and this principally on account of the continual changes which have been observed in its figure. Huygens, who was the discoverer of this beautiful and hitherto inexplicable phenomenon, expressed himself of opinion that, in viewing it, we saw, as it were, through an opening, *into a region of light.*”†

A Country Pastor states it as an *erroneous* idea, that when men in general “speak or think of going to *heaven* as to a place of happiness, they, in some degree, connect this in their minds with the idea of some nearer approach to those heavenly bodies, as they are called, which appear over our heads.”‡ But this notion may not be found so far wrong; for, *going to heaven*, may most probably mean our being taken to inhabit some magnificent orb, which, if we saw it from the earth, we might fancy it to be but a common star; or our glasses might be able to discover only some peculiar brilliancy or appearance in it. Our heaven may at this moment be luxuriating in all its richness; its blessed angelic inhabitants awaiting the approach of the human race with anxious and fond solicitude; and what is there impossible

\* Philosophy of a Future State.

† Wonders of the Heavens, p. 236.

‡ A view of the Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State, p. 215.

in the idea of some of its rays of glory having reached the eyes of our astronomers like a faint glimpse of light.

“The scriptures,” says Mr. Dick, “frequently refer to a particular place, circumstance, or manifestation, termed *the throne of God* ; as in the following passages : ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool.’—‘The Lord hath prepared *his throne in the heavens.*’ ‘*A glorious high throne* from the beginning is the place of thy sanctuary.’ ‘Therefore are they before *the throne of God*, and serve him day and night in his temple.’ These, and similar expressions, must be considered, either as merely metaphorical, or as referring to some particular region of the universe, where the Divine glory is reflected, in some peculiarly magnificent manner, from material objects ; and where the manifestations of the Divine character are most illustriously displayed. If there be a reference to the splendour and magnitude of a particular portion of creation, there is an astronomical idea, which may help us to form some conception of this ‘glorious high throne,’ which is the peculiar residence of the Eternal. It is now considered by astronomers, as highly probable, if not certain,—from late observations, from the nature of gravitation, and other circumstances, that all the systems of the universe revolve round *one common centre*,—and that this centre may bear as great a proportion, in point of magnitude to the universal assemblage of systems as the sun does to his surrounding planets. And since our sun is 500 times larger than the earth and all the other planets and their satellites taken together,—on the same scale such a central body would be 500 times larger than all the systems and worlds in the universe. Here then may be a vast universe of itself—an example of material creation, exceeding all the rest in magnificence and splendour, and in which are blended the glories of every other system. If this be really the case, it may with the most emphatic propriety, be termed the throne of God.”—“Within the limits of the last 150 years, it has been found, that the principal fixed stars have a certain apparent motion, which is nearly uniform and re-



gular, and is quite perceptible in the course of 30 or 40 years."—"The motion seems to indicate, that the earth, and all the other bodies of the solar system, are moving, in a direction from the stars in the southern part of the sky, towards those of the northern."\*

Were the idea of a central heaven really founded on such astronomical facts as would seem to indicate its existence, the idea might be called, (in the words of Mr. Dick,) "the most sublime and magnificent than can possibly enter into the mind of man," if indeed it could so enter in any definite manner; but no astronomer, accustomed to consider the magnitude of the countless orbs of the sky, and their unknown distances from the earth and from each other, could have the slightest comprehension of so vast a body as would be 500 times larger than all the rest taken together; if, too, he should assume such a *centre*, he could scarcely avoid connecting it also with a *circumference* to the universe, but both ideas are equally beyond all human conception.

The observations of Herschel and Laland, from which this centre has been inferred, were too limited and partial to form so general a conclusion as that the whole of the visible universe, or even our solar system is progressively advancing through absolute space, or in a vast circle, and the belief of these great astronomers on this point has not been borne out by the result of later observations, though there is certainly a motion clearly ascertained to be constantly taking place among those bodies usually called the fixed stars, yet it is more of the nature of a seemingly slow vibratory one—an advancing *and returning*—and with respect only to particular stars, or groupes of stars, than including all of them in one general forward movement. Indeed, were all the stars to move together thus regularly, we could not be sensible of it, because they would in a great measure preserve their relative positions to each other. The alteration of place in our solar system in particular, or towards the constellation Hercules, which Dr. Herschel fancied he had dis-

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\* Phil. of a Future State.

covered, and which is also noticed by Dr. Brewster, has not been supported by more recent observations made with a view to ascertain this very point.

In short, then, with regard to the universe, our present knowledge only leads us to conceive, that it is without limits, — centre, or circumference, — studded with worlds, many of which may be happy residences for sinless beings, — all noble instances of Almighty power, and swiftly moving in their appointed paths without confusion or irregularity, a result which could only have been produced by the most amazing forethought, skill, and creative energy. We believe that *eternity* had no beginning, as it is to have no ending, without understanding how this can be, — so let us consider the universe boundless as the power of God.



## CHAPTER XIV.

An Inquiry founded on Revelation, how far the predicted destruction at the last day shall involve the visible works of Creation.

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“As a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed.”

Ps. cii. 26.

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THERE are many who think that, because the conflagration which is denounced against this world for the sin of man, is to plunge it in destruction as it now exists, it will also be totally annihilated as if it had never been; and they have no difficulty in believing that all the millions of globes of which the universe seems to consist,\* will be equally involved in this dreadful catastrophe, heaven itself only escaping. Those, however, who have studied to obtain a just idea of the immense extent of creation, and of the distance at which lie many thousands of worlds far larger than ours, will endeavour to examine more into the denunciations in Holy Writ, which describe the last day of the earth (as it now is); in order, if possible, to discover if the fate of those great and distant bodies is there clearly said to be involved in that of our world, or our fate with theirs;—as such a coincidence between bodies so far asunder, and with all of which (except those of our own system) we have no apparent connexion, is exceedingly improbable. It will be found, not only that this is scarcely credible when judged of by the

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\* “The night is also a religious concern, and even more so, when I viewed the moon and stars through Herschel’s telescope, and saw that they were worlds.”—LORD BYRON. Moore’s Life of Byron. VI. p. 259.

light of science, but is, in fact, nowise borne out by Scripture, when fairly interpreted.

It is of considerable consequence that we inquire into this and endeavour to ascertain the true extent to which Revelation leads us to believe the destruction at the last day shall extend; since, if the stars suffer not at the same time as the earth, they shall remain as they are after the judgment shall have decided our eternal fate, and a more intimate acquaintance with them *may* constitute one delightful source of our future happiness.

Descriptions of the last day are very common both in poetry and prose, but, in general, they tend only to bewilder the mind with indefinite and bombastic absurdities, and to produce distorted views of the ways of Providence, leading their readers into false and extravagant conceptions, and preventing them from thinking soberly and rationally on the scenes predicted in Scripture.

In Dr. Young's poem of *The Last Day*, we find these lines :—

“How great, how firm, how sacred all appears!  
How worthy an immortal round of years!  
Yet all must drop, as autumn's sickliest grain,  
And earth and firmament be sought in vain;  
The ~~track~~ forgot where constellations shone,\*  
Or where the Stuarts fill'd an awful throne.  
Time shall be slain, all nature be destroyed,  
Nor leave an atom in the mighty void.”

Dr. Dodd, in his *Reflections on Death*, thus describes the terrors of the last day :—“Hark ! the heavens are passing away with *insufferable* noise ; the sun is extinguishing ; the stars have started from their spheres, and *all the system of created things is hastening into utter destruction.*”†

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\* Even the fixed stars are here supposed to vanish into nothing. The next line is an example of the bathos worthy to be placed beside—

“And thou, Dalhousie, mighty god of war,—  
Lieutenant-Colonel to the Earl of Mar.”

† Chap. xix.

In a lately published volume of sermons, we find what the writer seems to have intended as a very sublime description of the same dread event :—"The blast of the seventh trumpet thundering with terrific clangour through the sky, and echoing from world to world, shall fill the universe, and time shall be no more ! The six trumpets have already sounded : when the seventh shall blow, a total change shall take place throughout the creation ; the vast globe which we now inhabit shall dissolve *and mingle with yon beauteous azure firmament*, with sun, and moon, and all the immense luminaries flaming there, in *one undistinguished ruin* ; all shall vanish away like a fleeting vapour, a visionary phantom of the night, and *not a single trace of them be found !*"

A more complete specimen of unmeaning rant, it might be supposed, could scarcely be written, and the author of it must be held alike forgetful of what is known regarding the universe, and of interpreting Scripture in a rational manner, consistent with itself.

Mr. Montgomery's description of the same event is a still stronger instance of the bombast and roaring cataracts of nonsense (as the *Edinburgh Review* justly terms them) often poured forth upon this tremendous subject. Earth, we are told, shall be "*dashed into eternity.*" "A cloudy mantle shall enwrap the sun,"—and both it and the moon, "dyed into blood, shall glare from pole to pole, and light the airy tempests as they roll." The stars are to *bound from their depths*. The skies are to be "*shattered\* by the war of planet, moon, rent cloud, and down shot star,*" while the "stupendous wreck below," is to be seen of "a burning world."

"Around the horizon wheels one furnace blaze,  
 Streaking the black heavens with gigantic rays ;  
 Now bursting into wizard phantoms bright,  
 And now immingl'd in a sea of light,  
 Till racing hurricanes unrol on high,  
 And whirl the fire clouds quiv'ring through the sky !"

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\* It is evident that the poet believes in the crystal firmament, according to an ancient *philosophic* idea of the seeming azure canopy over our heads.

Then "the white waves gallop with delirious roar," and the ocean—"bounds, swells, and sinks, like *leaping hills of snow*. While downward vollied crags and torrents sweep," &c.—"Shadowy worlds career around," (probably the shades of those "dashed into eternity.") "*The universe* is wrapt in fire," and is soon to expire "a splendid ruin." The "red and raging eye of imagination" is advised to pry no farther, but the poet does not follow his own advice, for he imagines a great deal more. The moon is *quenched*, and the face of the sun is blackened. "*The stars have bounded through the airy roar.*" "The deep unbosomed with tremendous gloom yawns on the ruin."

"While shapes, and shrouds, and ghastly features gleam,  
Like *lurid snow-flakes* in the moon-light beam."

"The billows of eternity advance," but for all this racing, galloping, bounding, and delirious roars of all kinds,—there is—"no motion, blast or breeze, or waking sound," as these great waves roll on, and while in "*fiery slumber* glares the world around!" Then comes forward a car "by *living thunder* driven!" and the judgment is held while the universe is "still and dumb,"—"and hell o'er-shadowed with terrific gloom." To conclude the whole—

"Creation shudders with sublime dismay,  
And in a blazing tempest whirls away!"\*

And this is intended as serious religious poetry, written with a view, doubtless, to exalt our conceptions of the dread and awful event revealed to us!! Such may to many seem the language of genius, and the author may think he is contributing to advance the interests of religion by such rhapsodies, but he is, in fact, exposing it to the unbelieving smile of the scoffer; and even the serious Christian, who tries to understand or make sense in any way of such poetry, must confess that its incongruity tends more directly to excite ludicrous ideas highly unbecoming the subject, than to

elevation of thought or religious improvement. From the popularity and wide circulation which this species of writing enjoys, I have been more particular in endeavouring to expose its evil tendency than it intrinsically deserves ; and I would wish to contribute towards introducing more rational notions on such topics ; that mere high sounding words, full of fire and fury, but signifying nothing, may not set all common sense at defiance.\*

Let us now return from these insane ideas of the scenes to take place at the last day, to what is really foretold in the Sacred Volume, and call to our aid the interpretations of theological learning and of natural philosophy, but at the same time examining the revelations there made, with that great deference which their inspiration demands.

Our object is to draw the proper sense and meaning of Revelation in respect to what is to happen when the days of this world shall have terminated—when the sun shall no longer shine upon the present order of things on the earth—for it is only from this Divine Record that we can approach to the truths of futurity. If, however, poets or others should be inclined to *imagine* what more is to happen than is disclosed, there can be little harm in doing so, if it is in accordance with the other, or is not entirely inconsistent with it ; but these *fancies* should be stated as such, and not as if the Revelation of God prophetically intimated them. They ought to be described, too, so as to be at least in some degree understood, if the authors really know their own

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\* Were such descriptions not to be put to the test of being tried as to whether they convey any rational and definite ideas, we might soon have sense discarded in them altogether, and the burlesque lines put by Shakspeare into the mouth of Bottom the weaver, adopted as an example worthy of imitation :—

“ The raging rocks, and shivering shocks  
 Shall break the locks of prison gates ;  
 And Phibbus' car shall shine from far,  
 And make and mar the foolish fates ! ”

Midsommer Night's Dream.



meanings, which are usually the most mystical parts of such passages.

“To suppose, as some have done, that the whole fabric of creation will be shattered to pieces,—that the stars will literally fall, and the material universe be blotted out of existence, is a sentiment so absurd and extravagant, and so contrary to the general tenor of Scripture, and the character of God, that it is astonishing it should have ever been entertained by any man calling himself a divine or a Christian preacher.” \*

It should, in the first place, be remembered, that the earth instead of being, as the ancients believed it, the largest created body in the universe, and all the others subservient to it, is in fact one of the smallest and most insignificant in size. The sun shines with a light of his own, and therefore can be seen at an immense distance, and by the inhabitants of orbs far more distant from him than the earth. He gives light to all the planets of his system, even to the one removed farthest from him, whose distance is 19 times that of the earth. To some stars he will appear as small as they do to us, and from many others, he must be invisible altogether. The earth can be seen but by the reflected light of the sun, as we see the moon; and even if it shone with a light of its own, its size is comparatively so small, that it could be distinguished but at what must be called a short distance, when we take into account the incomparably greater space between some other bodies in the universe. The earth would not be seen from the nearest fixed star, and if we were no farther from it than the planet Venus, it would not seem larger than that planet does to us, for both are about the same size. We have several reasons, from astronomical observations, for believing that single planets and stars have been destroyed from the state they once were in, and that others have been carried away from their usual orbits or places, and yet without disturbing at all the existence and regular motion of the rest. Astronomers suspect-

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\* Phil. of a Future State.

ed, from the vast distance between the planets Mars and Jupiter, (in comparison of the space which intervenes between the others,) that at some time, another planet had revolved there, and which must have been destroyed or have vanished. The most careful telescopic examination was therefore made in the region of its supposed orbit, in order to try if any small one could be discovered, when four planetary bodies, (Asteroids as they are sometimes called,) were observed. The least, (named *Pallas*,) is only between 70 and 80 miles in diameter, so one of its inhabitants (if inhabited it be) could go round it on a rail-road with a steam carriage, in a very few hours. Whether these bodies were formed so originally, or are parts of one great globe which has been broken to pieces by some dread convulsion and judgment, we do not as yet know; but several astronomical facts regarding them, render the latter supposition by no means an improbable one.

In 1572, there came into our view, in the constellation Cassiopeia, a star so brilliant as to be seen in the day time, and which disappeared two years afterwards. A very remarkable star appeared in the year 1604, in the constellation *Serpentarius*: it surpassed Jupiter in magnitude, and in brilliancy exceeded that of every other star: when near the horizon, it shone with a white light, but in every other situation it assumed alternately the varying colours of the rainbow. It gradually diminished in splendour till about October, 1605, when it disappeared, and has not been seen since.\*

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\* From this star having at first rapidly increased in brightness, and then gradually diminished in its light, after exhibiting all the variety of tints that usually indicate the changes of combustion, Mrs. Somerville thinks it must have been *on fire* when it was visible to us; adding, that—"it is impossible to conceive any thing more tremendous than a conflagration that could be visible at such a distance."—But its variableness of colour may have depended on causes with which we are not acquainted, for we do not know what produces the different colours which we perceive in some of the double stars; these appear of various hues, as yellow, orange, red,—blue, purple, or green; the largest one of the pair being generally of either of the three first, and the second, of some of the three last mentioned colours, as noticed by the same

“What wert thou star of, vanish'd one?  
 What mystery was thine?  
 Thy beauty from the East is gone;  
 Where is thy pathway line?”

“Thou didst not sink as stars whose light,  
 The bright moon renders vain;  
 For they shine out the next dark night—  
 Will *thy* rays come again?”

Dost thou, ~~a~~ <sup>thy</sup> mansion for the blest,  
 Through heaven's vast concave fly?  
 Do unknown happy beings rest,  
 Beneath thy radiant sky?

Though now thou'rt a forgotten star,  
 Yet clear thy glories shine;  
 Thou art not lost, though distant far;  
 And show'st some high design!

The disappearance or change of the earth would occasion no greater alteration in the *general* system of the universe, or appear more conspicuous to other orbs, than if a small star were suddenly to disappear while we were gazing at the heavens in a clear night.\* But this is supposing the earth totally annihilated, or carried from its place to some far distant region, neither of which fates have we any reason to expect. The moon is the only heavenly body which would *necessarily* be affected even by the annihilation of the earth; for its circular motion round us, depends upon the power of gravity exerted by our globe; but if only a *change* is to befall this earth at the last day, and if its *bulk* remains the same, its gravity might still keep the moon in its present orbit.

In St. Peter we read, that “the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved

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lady in the preliminary dissertation to her very learned work on the *Mechanism of the Heavens*.

\* “The universe at large would suffer as little in its splendour and variety by the destruction of our planet, as the verdure and sublime magnitude of a forest would suffer by the fall of a single leaf.”—Dr. CHALMERS.

unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”—“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.”—“Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.\* Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”†

In a preceding chapter it was mentioned, that the Jews distinguished three heavens, which were there explained. The ablest expositors of these passages just quoted, do not think that they allude to any *heavens* beyond our own atmosphere, which extends only to a distance of about 47 miles from the earth.

The Rev. Dr. Guise, in his *Paraphrase on the New Testament*, interprets the 7th and 12th verses above referred to, precisely in this sense: “When that final decisive day of the Lord Jesus shall come,—the *aerial heavens*, being all in a flame, shall be destroyed, and the constituent principles of the atmosphere, together with the earth and all things in it shall be melted down by an intense dissolving heat, into a confused chaos, like that out of which they were originally formed.”—And in a note on this paraphrase he remarks,—“By the *heavens* is meant here the *aerial heavens*. For the heavens and the earth are here spoken of in opposition to

\* “The Stoic and Epicurean philosophers held, that the world was to be destroyed by fire, and all things fall again into original chaos; not excepting even the national gods themselves from the destruction of this general conflagration.” Pottapeli. Lib. of Entertaining Knowledge.

In Pliny the younger’s letter to Tacitus, descriptive of the fatal eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79—he mentions, that when the mountain had involved them in darkness, and was destroying the country all around, the people imagined that the last and eternal night was come over the world, which was to ruin it as a dwelling for man, and also to involve the deities who more immediately presided over its different nations and cities.

† 2 Pet. iii. 7—14.

those of the old world, which could mean nothing more than the earth and its former atmosphere, the state of which underwent a great alteration by the flood.”—“By *the heavens and the earth*, in such passages as these,” says the learned Dr. Mede, “is to be understood, that part of nature which was subjected to the curse, or that which is inhabited by Christ’s enemies, and includes in it the earth, water, and air, *but not the heavenly bodies*, which are not only at a vast distance from it, but it is little more than a point if compared to them for magnitude.”

The Rev. Dr. Dwight, when adverting to this subject, expresses the same sentiment :—“The phrase—*heavens and earth*—in Jewish phraseology denoted the universe. In the present case, however,\* the words appear to be used with a meaning less extended, where it is declared, that that which is intended by both terms, shall be consumed and pass away. This astonishing event, we are taught, shall take place at the final judgment; and we have no hint in the Scriptures, that the judgment will involve any other beings besides angels and men.”—The author meaning here apparently, merely *the fallen angels*, and all mortals who have been dwellers upon earth, but not including any beings of whatever nature they may be, who inhabit the other great orbs of the universe.

It is not *past* our comprehension how, *in so far*, the sublimity of the last day may be heightened by phenomena among the elements of an appalling and awful nature, arising from simple causes, if directed by an Almighty hand, and which would exactly fulfil some texts of Scripture generally held to refer to that time; as for instance where it is said, that “the heavens shall pass away with a mighty noise,”—meaning, of course, the *aerial heavens* or atmosphere of the earth, if the allusion is supposed really to be applied to this tremendous scene in a literal manner. Atmospheric air is not an elementary substance as was long believed, and from our knowledge of its component parts,

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\* 2 Pet. iii. 10. 12, 13.

we are aware that it can be dissolved so as to *pass away* from its present nature. Were the aqueous vapour suspended in it to be separated into its constituent parts—hydrogen and nitrogen—these would produce the most perfect inflammable mixture known, and when exploded, would again become water. This explosion would envelope the earth in flame, and produce the most dreadful and astounding thunderings, which must fill with awe all human-kind,—a fact of which no one can have any doubt who has heard an explosion on a small scale, in the common chemical experiments with these gases. In consequence of such commotions and new combinations, another heavens, or air would arise, which might occasion effects on the earth, and on renewed and changed man, of which we can now have little conception. The present surface of the earth would be blasted and ruined by the heat and concussion, but a new formation might soon take the place of the old, as has before repeatedly been the case ; although, perhaps, not formerly in the same way as we are now anticipating, but the fact of such revolutions in the crust of the earth is proved for our instruction, in plainer characters than the Hebrew of Moses, and even more authentically transmitted to us, being still legible in the original record of God which our research has discovered in the bowels of the earth ; but is nowise inconsistent with the details of the **great Jewish** historian, when both are properly understood.

Some of those prophetic announcements in the Scriptures, which are by superficial readers considered as plainly applying to the events of the last day alone, are with much better reason (and indeed, in some texts must be) believed by the soundest and most learned divines, to refer, at least in the first place, to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and it is sometimes not easy to distinguish what is applied to each : the terrible events which befel that devoted city and the Jewish nation, being clearly typified under the terms used in some of the passages alluded to. This is the opinion of Bishop Newton, and many other theological writers who have paid the greatest attention to the peculiar style of the

language of ancient prophecy. To suppose that it should be all taken *literally*, is in the very face of the record, and even if it should be so considered, it would be necessary to be certain of the particular event to which an expression alluded, before we could make the application ;—whether, for instance, a prophecy was intended to predict the destruction of Jerusalem with its accompanying miseries and temporal judgments, or entirely to refer to the events of the last day, or partly to both, the one as a type of the other. With the most reverential deference and belief in divine predictions, it is surely necessary that every person understand what they refer to, and how they are to be interpreted, before they can be called on to credit certain future events, and we must be well assured of the sense in which they were communicated. The language in which the Deity has chosen to communicate future events, is, in some parts, of so very mysterious a nature, and is thought by our weak understandings capable of such different interpretations, that when we come to apply many particular passages to certain events yet in futurity, or even to events which have happened, we are often liable to be mistaken. This is evident from the difference of opinion which prevails among those commentators who have studied it with the greatest care and ability ; and we sometimes think one modern expounder is uniformly *right*, only until we read the works of another. The explanations, however, which Scripture itself furnishes, of the language employed, cannot be wrong, and these will assist us to at least a general knowledge of those instances to which it does not give a direct explanation. Even the disciples of our Lord did not understand the prophetic announcements relative to him in the writings of the prophets or his own verbal intimations, until he himself explained them after his resurrection ; nor did the wisest of the Jewish doctors ; and in some cases it does not appear to have been intended that they should know the real import at first ; as when Christ told them that if the temple was destroyed he could build it up in three days. It will be proper, therefore, in order to know whether those prophecies relative to

the stars falling are to be taken *literally*, to investigate the ancient and scriptural meanings of such expressions in those passages where this may be more obvious than in the texts generally referred to as indicating a literal construction. The result will show that both in ancient and in modern times, such phrases were, and are even still, commonly used in a metaphoric sense, without any reference being had to those heavenly bodies which we see glittering in the sky, or to their being either annihilated or removed from their places at the day of judgment. At the same time, even a strictly literal interpretation may be put upon some of the apparently strongest of these texts, and yet both the fixed stars and the planets left in their usual spheres.

Bishop Warburton informs us that—"in the hieroglyphic writing, the sun, moon, and stars, were used to represent states and empires, kings, queens, and nobility; their eclipse and extinction, temporary disasters, or entire overthrow, &c. So in like manner the holy prophets call kings and empires by the names of the heavenly luminaries; their misfortunes and overthrow are represented by eclipses and extinction; stars falling from the firmament are employed to denote the destruction of the nobility, &c. In a word, *the prophetic style seems to be a speaking hieroglyphic.*"—This "was the sober established language of their times, and which God and his Son condescended to employ as the properest conveyance of the high mysterious ways of providence, in the revelation of themselves to mankind."\*

The predictions of the sun becoming black, the moon as blood, the heavens departing as a scroll, mountains removed out of their places, the stars falling from heaven, &c. have all been understood by many, as intended to be literally fulfilled at the awful day of doom, because these things have been thought to be spoken of in the Old and New Testament as to happen on that great day of the wrath of God,†—the last day.

The same images and expressions, however, are also em-

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\* Divine Legation. Vol. II. Book 4, § 4.

† Rev. vi. 17.



ployed by the prophets evidently concerning the alterations of religions and governments. Haggai, regarding the first coming of Christ, says, in the words of his inspiration—"I will shake the heavens and the earth, and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms ;"\* which the prophet himself immediately explains as applying to temporal revolutions, by adding—"and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen." Joel, in his second chapter, when speaking of a terrible temporal judgment which was to befall the Jews, tells them that the earth shall quake ; the sun and the moon shall be dark, and *the stars shall withdraw their shining* ; all plainly in a figurative sense, as the concluding part of the chapter and beginning of the next clearly testifies. The language used as descriptive of the opening of the sixth seal, is similar. "A great earthquake," or great concussion, or shaking of the earth, (into either of which expressions the original phrase may be translated,) is thus often used in scriptural style for changes in states,—for the great of the land being deposed,—slain,—and to indicate civil commotions. The particular accompaniments of this general concussion, as mentioned in Revelation, are thus described :—"And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ; and *the stars of heaven fell unto the earth*, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind : and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."† Isaiah speaks much in the same manner of troubles which were to happen in Babylon and Idumea.—"For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light : the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. *All the host of heaven shall be dissolved*, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll ; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree."‡ Balaam prophesied that—"there shall come a

\* Haggai ii. 21, 22.

† Rev. vi. 12—14.

‡ Is. xiii. 10. ; xxxiv. 4.

star out of Jacob, and a sceptre out of Israel :”—meaning, by these similes, a great or eminent man, and a ruler. This prophecy was long afterwards taken advantage of by a robber named Barchochab, which signifies *Son of a Star*, and he pretended to be the person alluded to.\*

In like manner with some of those more ancient prophecies, our Saviour’s prediction, so often quoted in reference to the last day, is understood by many commentators as capable of a double meaning, and applicable, in some respects, to the destruction of Jerusalem. “The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”—“It is true,” says Bishop Newton, “the figures are here very strong, but not more so than are used by the ancient prophets when predicting changes, revolutions, and judgments upon earth.” The same author thinks, that although this passage may, in a figurative sense, be understood of the destruction of Jerusalem, in its literal sense it can be meant only of the end of the world—that is, we are to take it as predicting dreadful changes in the world at that time, expressed in the common and well-understood language of those days.

The prophet Daniel, speaking of the slaughter of the Jews by the little horn, says that it waxed great, even to the host of heaven; “and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them.”† A small horn bound upon the forehead was used in ancient times as a symbol of power and of kingly authority, and it is so even to this day in Abyssinia.‡ It was thence taken in figurative language to signify kings, kingdoms, and great men. “Thus it is,” remarks Bishop Newton, “that in the prophetic language, great commotions and revolutions upon earth are often represented by commotions and changes in the heavens.”§—“In the ancient prophets,” he adds, “God

\* See Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. IV. cap. 6.

† Dan. vii. 10.

‡ See Bruce’s Travels in Abyssinia.

§ Diss. XX. Part iii.

is frequently described as coming *in the clouds* upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power."

Although these prophecies seem at first so clearly to allude to the last day, yet, in some of them, the predicted nearness of their fulfilment show that they cannot refer to so distant a time. In that by Christ, he speaks of troubles, portents, and signs, and then adds, that his word shall come to pass "*immediately after the tribulation of those days ;*" and before some who heard him should die. The total destruction of Jerusalem did then happen after various supernatural signs in the heavens and on the earth, and wars, famines, &c. are recorded by Jewish and Heathen authors. Dr. Warburton assures us, as the result of his laborious and learned inquiries, that "in the whole prophetic language, the carnage and fall of principalities and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by the shaking heaven and earth ; the darkening the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, as the rise and establishment of new ones are by processions in the clouds of heaven, by the sound of trumpets, and the assembling together of hosts and congregations." In this opinion Bishop Newton concurs.

The star which fell from heaven on the opening of the fifth seal has been supposed to refer to Mahomet, who opened the bottomless pit, and thence arose a smoke which darkened the sun and moon,—“that is, a false religion was set up, which filled the world with darkness and error ; and swarms of Saracen or Arabian ‘locusts’ overspread the earth.”\* We speak of the *dark* ages, meaning those of ignorance and error, although the sun shone then as bright as it does now. “A false prophet is very fitly typified by a blazing star or meteor.” This will appear more decidedly to be the proper understanding, from a consideration of the *locusts* mentioned in the same place. “The Arabians are properly compared to locusts, not only because numerous armies frequently are so, but also because, in the plagues of Egypt, to which constant allusion is made in these trum-

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\* Newton's 24th Diss.

pets, 'the locusts,'\* are brought by an east wind—that is, from Arabia, which lay eastward of Egypt; and also because, in the Book of Judges, the people of Arabia are compared to locusts or grasshoppers for multitude, for, in the original, the word for both is the same."† Such is the style of prophecy, as explained by Bishop Newton, who shows that, by the great red dragon, mentioned in the Apocalypse, whose tail swept down the stars, is probably figured the Roman empire. Purple or scarlet was the distinguishing colour of the Roman emperors, consuls, and generals; as it has since been of the popes and cardinals. The seven heads, as the angel afterwards explains‡ the vision, allude to the seven mountains upon which Rome was built, and to the seven forms of government which successively prevailed there. The ten horns typify the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided; and the seven crowns upon his heads denote that at this time the imperial power was in Rome. His tail also drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; that is, he subjected the third part of the princes and potentates of the earth.§

The cattle in Pharaoh's dream;—the great image, and the high tree in the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar;—the sheaves of corn, and *the moon and the eleven stars* in Joseph's dreams, may further illustrate the symbolic manner in which the events of futurity were showed forth to men in prophecy. It was divinely explained to Daniel, that the four beasts in his vision were intended to represent four kings: the ten horns were also said to be kings.|| In another vision—a ram which he saw with two horns—the latter were told him signified the kings of Media and Persia; and that a rough goat was intended for the king of Grecia.¶ In such shadowy representations, cities were typified by wo-

\* Exod. x. 13.

† Many more reasons are given by this author for the similitude.

‡ Chap. xvii. 9, 10.

§ See Newton's 25th Diss. on the Prophecies. Part II.

|| Dan. vii. 17—24.

¶ Dan. viii. 20, 21.

men, and indeed they are still so figured, as medals and coins amply testify. In Holy Writ, the new Jerusalem is likened to a bride decked out for her husband, and a certain wicked city is prophesied of under the figure of a lady in scarlet.

The principal grounds for extending the commotion of the last day of our earth *to the stars*, are these prophetic announcements which have now been shown to relate in a figurative manner partly to the fall of Jerusalem; and that even if these texts are held entirely as relative to the end of the world—they are not to be interpreted literally. Let those who are inclined to consider such as to happen according to their verbal import, reflect for a moment, whither it could be imagined the stars would fall down? When their relative sizes to the earth are remembered, it would be absurd to say that they would fall to it. This would be assuming, in the first place, that the globe we live on is the centre of all the universe which we see! and next, that such immense and distant bodies as the stars would all do homage to the earth by approaching it. Even if they did, it would only be a change of place. It cannot appear to one acquainted with the system of the universe, more impossible to understand our blessed Lord *literally* when he said that the Scribes and Pharisees devoured widows' houses, than when he spoke of the stars falling,—if it is supposed that what we call the fixed stars are all or any of them to come to the earth; or, when he spoke of the city of Capernaum as being exalted to heaven, to infer that it had once been actually there.\* Great and eminent men are still often likened *to stars*, and the simile is well understood. An old ballad, in reference to the death of a chief, laments that “a tower is fallen—a star is set,”† and figurative expressions of a not very dissimilar nature to some of the predictions we have been discussing, are in common use amongst us, which

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\* See Dr. Campbell's explanation of this saying of our Lord's. Diss. VI.

† Lamentation for Celin. Lockart's Spanish Ballads.

no one ever thinks of taking literally. Who could suppose, for example, that Sir Walter Scott, (or any person else,) believed that the moon actually danced upon a rivulet, because one of his poems commences thus :—

~~The~~ stag at eve had drunk its fill,  
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill."

Which implies merely that the motion of the water reflected the image of the moon in an undulating manner ; and if the awful commotions on the last day should, through the medium of the varying refractions of the surrounding air, cause the *appearance* of the heavenly bodies to alter, as if they were in rapid motion, it would sufficiently fulfil prophecy, if we should even consider that it related in some degree to ~~the~~ stars themselves at that time ; but it is exceedingly unlikely that there is any actual reference at all to the fate of these heavenly bodies, which have nothing to do with our earth in any way whatever ; and they must be only mentioned as similes, from their conspicuous brilliancy and eminence in the sky ; in the same way as Jeremiah says that good men shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever. The ancients fabled that great men were, on particular occasions, metamorphosed into stars ; which perhaps meant, that their souls were carried to some of these distant bodies ; but ~~it~~ is only in modern times, that such an incongruous, and indeed *impossible* event has been believed—as that all the stars should come here, and those who do so believe, may with equal credulity and misconception, fancy that the moon may dash down into a rill upon earth !

If we are to think that even the other planets of our system are to be involved in the expected destruction of the last day, we must imagine that these immense worlds are either entirely desolate and uninhabited, or that they are peopled by beings who have sinned, and who are then to be called to account as well as ourselves. To include the fixed stars,—the suns of other systems, in the same fate,

and at the same time with our own, would be the height of absurdity and misconception of Holy Writ.

“Since all the revelations of Scripture have” (in the words of Mr. Dick) “a peculiar reference to the inhabitants of this globe, the predicted changes which ~~are to~~ take place in its physical constitution, at the close of the present economy of Providence, must be considered as limited to the same sphere. As the world was formerly destroyed by a deluge of waters, in consequence of the depravity of man, so its destruction by fire will take place for the same reason.”\*

Let us try, however, another mode of interpretation as to the stars falling; supposing, for a moment, the prophecies mean to involve even them in the destruction or change of the earth. In common language, the planets are ~~also~~ called *stars*, and it may not be thought beyond the limits of probability that these shall change their ~~places~~. If all those of our system then fell down to the sun, (which is the only direction in which they could be all said to *fall down*) then, our Lord's words would be *literally* fulfilled to a certain extent. Were this to happen, and then the whole mass were to be removed from the firmament in an instant, these occurrences would be only noticed by an *attentive* observer of the heavens standing on any of the fixed stars; in the same way that the disappearance of one of the stars themselves might not be known for several years by us here on earth, even if we could perceive its absence whenever it happened, which their distance and the time that light takes to travel, would prevent for a considerable time.† We usually term electric meteors shooting or falling *stars*, although they are generally only small collections of brilliant light, rapidly

\* Phil. of a Fut. State.

† It was only few years since we knew even of the existence of a world which is immensely larger than the earth, and yet it is a planet of our own solar system. Though at a vast distance from us,—still, when compared with that of the fixed stars, it may be said to be a neighbouring state. I allude to the planet Uranus, discovered by Dr. Herschel, and hence sometimes called by his name.

passing from one place to another at no great distance from us. Such meteoric appearances have been seen of all different shapes and sizes and degrees of light. They have appeared singly, and in showers of fire, accompanied sometimes with many other beautiful and extraordinary atmospheric phenomena.\*

If our aerial heaven is set on fire at the last day, one of its component parts, must be consumed, and consequently what remains must be rendered much lighter; in which case, well known experiments prove that the electrical appearances would be enabled, in natural course, to assume a brilliancy and magnificence, of which we can at present form but a faint idea. Then, all around us, shooting stars may be flashing in terrible size and grandeur, and were our atmosphere so dissolved, then all the heavenly bodies would appear to come nearer us and to be suspended at different distances in space, instead of seeming as now to be studded in one hollow sphere. If the body of the sun was uncovered by the retiring of the luminous atmosphere which surrounds him, total darkness must ensue if no other light was substituted, as the moon would consequently have no light to reflect to us. Another source of light might then, however, arise from great streams and flashes of the *aurora borealis* and other electrical phenomena. The rays, also, from the fixed stars would be able to penetrate to us with superior brilliancy, if their beams had no earthly atmosphere to struggle through. Our increased powers of vision or new senses may then disclose to us many of the deep secrets of nature, and, in particular, the whole of the heavenly bodies may, from our seeing them better, put on quite a different aspect in several respects, and seem of indescribable splendour.

We read that *a star* guided the wise men of the east from a great distance to Bethlehem, but it is absolutely impossible to have been what we now in strict astronomical language understand by a *star* or planet, which could not go before people walking upon earth so as to point out a road to them,

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\* See, for one remarkable instance, the *Annual Register* for 1799, p. 159.



and then stand over an individual house in a city ! The truth of Scripture, however, will not be shaken in the slightest degree, if we see reason to believe that only a miraculous meteor was here meant.\*

If reference be intended to be made to the last day, when it is said in Revelation that "the earth and heaven fled away,"† "we are not to imagine," observes Mr. Dick,— "that the distant bodies of the universe shall be either annihilated, or removed from the spaces they formerly occupied ; but that all sublunary nature shall be thrown into confusion and disorder." "The appearances of the heavens, in reality receding from the view, would be produced, were the earth to leave its present station among the planets, and be impelled with a rapid motion towards the distant parts of the solar system, or beyond its boundaries, in which case, the sun would appear to fly off with a rapid motion to a distant part of space, till he had diminished to the size of a star, and the moon and the nearest planets would in a short time entirely disappear." It is not clear, in the above, what Mr. Dick means by *the heavens* receding from the view. Were the earth to leave its orbit, and fly in one direction with the swiftness of a cannon ball for millions of years, the general appearance of the heavens to its inhabitants might not be greatly different from what we see at present in a clear night. The sun and planets would seem gradually to recede from us till at last they would wholly disappear, from our leaving them, and we should lose sight of some stars in the same way,—but we should approach nearer to others, and new stars and constellations would continue to rise to our sight. Other suns, of which we now know little, and others of which we know nothing, would, we have reason to believe, continue to bespangle the varying firmament, and from which we should

\* "That a new star or planet was created, or that such, if created, could go before any travellers, and settle over any particular spot, is manifestly impossible." Gleig's History of the Bible, vol. ii. p. 257.

Mr. G. in a preceding page, calls it a star or meteor, p. 236.

† Chap. xx. 11.

derive more or less light according to our distance from them or their planets. Mr. Dick has, besides the above quotation, stated many *appearances* which the heavenly bodies would assume, from the circumstances attendant on the convulsions of the earth and its appendages at the last day, accounting for them in a natural manner, so as to realize the descriptions of the Scriptures, were these even to be taken much more literally than we have reason to believe them to have been intended, and to relate to the time of which we are speaking; and this without supposing any change to take place in the universe beyond the limits of the earth and its atmosphere.

Let us now confine our attention to the earth itself, and to the fate it is destined to undergo at the time new or altered bodies for our souls are to arise from it—at the last day of its present formation.

Whatever *changes* our earth may yet be fated to experience, we have no grounds for believing that these will end in its *annihilation*. The component parts of both earth and air must still exist under new combinations, probably forming another earth and atmosphere, in some respects, perhaps, different, and in some the same as the present. When any material substance is *dissolved*, its particles, or primary atoms, combine with other bodies, and ~~exist~~ only in another shape, for nothing is annihilated, as all philosophers are agreed. The inspired writers speak of the stars as being—"stablished *for ever and ever*," and our faith is not called upon in any part of the Bible to believe in truth that the earth or any of the heavenly orbs shall cease to exist under any form or nature. Our ideas of the construction of the universe, and those credited in the scriptural times are very different; for we no longer look on the earth as a plain, or that the stars and the whole heavenly host act a subordinate part to it. We do not now believe that the stars are placed in a canopy of some solid transparent material, although we still retain the ancient name for it by calling it *the firmament*. In Job there is a remarkable re-

ference to this celestial vault :—" Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and *as a molten looking-glass?*"\* The *windows* of heaven are said to be opened, to pour out the rain; hail, snow. In the first verse of the xciii. Ps. we read that—" *the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved,*" which was the general idea of the time, and that the whole universe rolled round the earth ! Were the earth really the centre of the whole visible universe, and the sun, moon, stars, and planets all turned round it as the centre of their orbits,—if we could likewise believe that it was larger than them all, there might be no improbability in the thought that they should all suffer from our change of state ; but if these ideas are demonstrably false, such an inference must be given up. Copernicus was the first who proved the absurdity of such movements as would cause the distant orbs of the sky set in crystal to revolve round this little earth in 24 hours ! Every effect in nature is brought about by the most admirable yet simple means possible ; to suppose the sun and the rest of the heavenly bodies whirling about the earth in a day, in order to warm and enlighten every part of it in turn, would be absurd in the highest degree, now that we know their relative sizes and distances. If any person who wished to roast a suspended apple should, in order to effect this, contrive to make a vast fire revolve about it, instead of the apple itself turn on its axis, we should have little opinion of his ingenuity as shown in the contrivance. Yet there would be less apparent want of skill in such a plan, than in that which would make the sun, stars, and planets turn round the earth ; which, the more we consider, the more impossible it appears ; and the deeper knowledge we acquire of astronomical facts, (tending to enlarge our acquaintance with the system of the universe,) the more evident will the absurdity of such a belief become.

The opinions of the ancients, therefore, regarding the motions of the earth and heavenly bodies, or any of their ideas of the earth as to its shape or extent, are not to be

held correct merely because we find them recorded in the Bible ; or because its revelations did not communicate the truths we now know to be such. Although these, when first promulgated, were held as heresies by the church, yet we have now more enlightened notions of the Scriptures, than to think they were meant to teach us astronomy against the clearest natural proofs to the contrary of such systems as were then accredited,—or to reject all farther knowledge, because God did not think fit to give it to us sooner ! Some of the most eminent modern astronomers have been advocates for Christianity on the authority of the Scriptures, Sir Isaac Newton, in particular, although none of them take these writings as authority also in matters which relate to the system of the universe.

There has been one passage quoted from our Divine Record which ought also to be noticed while on the present subject, as it seems at first to show that the last day of the existing appearances of the face of nature on the earth, shall likewise affect and even end the existence of all the other globes as well as our own. The Psalmist exclaims—“ Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy hands : *they shall perish*, but Thou shalt endure ; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou *change* them, and they shall be changed ; but Thou art the same,” &c. Here there would appear a contradiction of those reasonings we have been considering, which tend to show the stability of all created things in some form or other. The passage may be supposed to have been intended literally to apply to the earth and its aerial heaven, or it may, in a more extended sense, denote the whole of the heavenly bodies, the stars and planets ; but, even in this last view, it would not in reality disprove what has been argued. The Royal author is contrasting the mutable nature of all created fabrics with the unchangeableness of God ; but the *change* spoken of cannot mean such an entire destruction as to amount to annihilation. We read that—“ the righteous *perish*, and no man layeth it to heart,” and—“ they that are far from God *shall*

*perish*," although few suppose that either good or bad men are removed altogether from existence when they are taken from the mortal life of this world, for we believe that they exist still in spiritual happiness or misery. We are not, therefore, entitled to infer from the above expression of the Psalmist's, relative to the heavens and earth, that these shall *perish*, as we usually understand this word ; for a *change* or *revolution* does not imply utter *destruction*, nor does even *destruction* at all mean *annihilation*. The simile borrowed from the changing or folding up of clothing, is in allusion to the still common Eastern custom of appearing on certain occasions in various raiments, and from the loose nature of the oriental clothing, these ceremonial changes are very speedily effected. The allusion may also be intended, therefore, to intimate to us how easily the great change of the earth and all pertaining to it shall be accomplished by God. It is not very unlikely that all the planets and stars may at some period of their existence be subjected to change as well as the earth : We have no grounds, however, for thinking they shall all be changed *at once*, but at different times in the interminable duration of eternity ; and such change in any one of them, although it must be the termination of the previous state of their nature, would only be the beginning of another.

From what has been said in this chapter, the following conclusions may be drawn :—

1st, That Scripture does not, when interpreted *consistently with itself*, include the planets and stars in the great predicted change of things, and that where these bodies are mentioned in the descriptions of the last day, it must be only in a metaphoric sense.

2d, That from the insignificance of the earth in point of size when compared with many of the other globes in the universe, and their immense number, it is also very *improbable* that these will be included in whatever is to befall the

earth at the day when the race of beings which have lived upon it shall be judged for their conduct during that life.

3d, That stars and planets appear to have been changed, both in their positions and matter, without affecting even any others in their neighbourhood, as far as we can observe, and that no allusion is made in the sacred writings to the *annihilation* of any worlds or starry orbs ;—change of place or alteration only being indicated when allusion is made to them, and even if the sun and planets of our system are to be held as included in the catastrophe which shall involve the earth and its atmosphere, there is not the most distant probability that any bodies beyond them, such as the fixed stars, shall share their fate.

4th, If the earth and heavenly bodies remain after we have entered upon our eternal state, or if any of them shall do so, it is highly probable that the accepted of God, promoted in the scale of creation to be the angels or messengers of His will throughout the immeasurable universe, shall become infinitely better acquainted with these bodies and the secret laws which direct them than at present ; and there can be no good reason assigned against the idea of our inhabiting either one or several of them in our glorified state ; or at least of then visiting them, and gradually learning more and more of their respective natures.



## THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF IMMORTALITY.

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IN Man's bright morn he feels as Life could stay  
For aye, or deems Death's hand as far away ;  
But when most thoughtless of this fatal power,  
Unseen it often strikes us in that hour :  
Laughing unconscious of the danger near—  
We sudden start as mortal signs appear.  
To earthly joys we cling as loath to part,  
When even life is ebbing from the heart.  
But ought this world's light wreaths of flowers to bind  
In willing thralldom those who hope to find  
Immortal pleasures under heavenly ray,  
And the next hour may close life's transient day ?  
O ! life oft steals away when spring in green  
First paints the buds whose leaves may ne'er be seen  
By eyes which hope made sparkle brightest when  
Warm breezes promis'd life to flowers and men.  
May we be ever ready then to leave  
This world to meet with those whom now we grieve,



And calmly trust the Voice which cannot lie,  
 That we may live beneath a happier sky,  
 And never sorrow know or tears again,  
 But dwell in bliss instead of grief and pain.

While, therefore, here, we often ought to spare  
 An hour to think on what we yet may share  
 In after times, beyond this earthly state,—  
 Then let us ponder on our future fate.

Do souls lie torpid here beneath the clod,  
 When the frail body yields its life to God?  
 No! Death o'er Spirits never yet could reign,  
 Nor can corruption touch them with its stain.  
*They* need no breath, nor hearts, nor blood to flow  
 Through frames which sink beneath Death's slightest blow;  
 But, when dark fate fulfils our mortal doom,  
 The soul must then that instant burst the gloom  
 Which now o'erhangs the unseen state of death,  
 But soon shall vanish when we yield our breath.  
 Then change will flash more grand and more sublime  
 Than if, when wintry darkness chills our clime,  
 Night sudden fled, and glorious summer shone,  
 Bright as in days which warmed our Eden gone!  
 Souls then shall cease from cares on mortal stage,  
 But never weary as when time brought age;  
 Friends gone before will rush upon our sight,  
 And bid us welcome to their realms of light;

While angels lead to our appointed place,  
 And loud hosannas from a holy race  
 Ascend to Highest Heaven, and we shall hear  
 The words which now our nature could not bear :  
 Yet *Heaven* it is not—but a place for *rest*,  
 Where conscience makes us mis'erable or blest,  
 'Till the last day, when wicked men shall quake,  
 And bodies, hid in earth and sea, shall wake ;  
 For frames immortal from the ground shall spring,  
 To wail in darkness, or in light to sing.  
 Then once again all human souls shall find  
 Material dwellings for the conscious mind.

When o'er the body sleep holds potent sway,  
 The soul can look on brighter light than day ;  
 It then in ancient times oft heard the call  
 Of an Almighty Being hid from all.  
 When earthly voices no impression make,  
 The soul can hear, and speak, though not awake  
 The body be ; and so, when Death shall close  
 Our eyes upon the world and all its woes,  
 The soul, like shooting-star, is swiftly borne,  
 To dwell in Hades till the judgment morn,  
 Where, conscious of its state—of hope or fear—  
 Its thoughts may soar to Heaven, or know perdition near.

Should we not think, then, of earth's dreadful day,  
 And how to gain our pardon while we may ?

For men are promised, if to Christ they flee,  
 Repent—and make their works with faith agree,  
 That he will save them, when his thunders sound—  
 When power and glory circle him around.  
 And, though that time is hid as yet in night,  
 Yet will it burst full surely on our sight :  
 Then all who ever liv'd in earthly state  
 Shall hear the doom of their eternal fate.

The judgment past, the blest their heaven shall gain,  
 And range unwearied without care or pain.  
 No longer disembodied shall bewail  
 Their nature incomplete, or bodies frail.  
 The mansions then which sainted eyes shall see,  
 Must far surpass what here may lovely be.  
 Dwellers in other worlds shall wonders tell,  
 And Angels join us there who never fell.  
 There Adam pure shall stray as when began  
 The sun of Eden first to shine on man,  
 And show'd how God-like human kind could be  
 When paradise from sin and death was free ;  
 Seeming itself a heaven in earthly guise,  
 Where God was seen before their wondering eyes,  
 And held communion with our favoured race,  
 Before the demon Sin unveil'd his face,  
 Or yet had mingl'd crime and shame with joy,  
 Debasing purest bliss with their alloy.  
 The God of Nature yet shall bid us rise,  
 To trace those secrets, hid from mortal eyes ;

While those who lov'd on earth his skill to trace,  
 Through all his works spread round their dwelling place  
 Will joyous scan new scenes in heavenly lands,  
 And drink of streams which flow o'er golden sands.  
 Each fresh discovery of th' Almighty's skill  
 Shall raise their love and wonder higher still ;  
 Before his face his saints shall grateful fall,  
 And worship HIM whose goodness reigns o'er all.  
 How long, O Lord ! who holy art and true !  
 Wilt thou then bid us but in fancy view  
 Those glorious regions of eternal life,  
 Where love and peace shall reign, and never strife  
 Can enter there, to prompt the slightest sigh,  
 But heaven-born pleasure be for ever nigh !



## APPENDIX.

### A.

IN the Apocryphal Book of Wisdom, we read, according to our translation, that—"God created man to be immortal, and made him an image of his own eternity. Nevertheless, through the envy of the devil, came death into the world."\* From a casual perusal of the above, it might be inferred to contradict (in as far as its authority may be allowed) what has been argued in the first chapter of this work, or that the body was created mortal; but a little consideration of the arguments there used, it is presumed, will show that they are fully sanctioned by the account of the Tree of Life, as given by Moses, and the meaning, therefore, of the text just quoted, must only be, that God at first intended man "to be immortal;"† which intention indeed was evident from the means having been provided for preventing his body from dying, and although Adam must not have been aware of the virtue of the tree,

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\* The Wisdom of Solomon, ch. ii. 23, 24.—See also ch. i. 14, 15, 16.

† The phrase in the Septuagint is 'ἐπ' ἀφθαρσία, literally, unto or for incorruption: in the Syriac version, *corruptiones expertem*, void or free of corruption: in the Arabic, *ad incorruptabilitatem*, unto or for incorruptability. All which readings may be fairly interpreted as rendered in the English translation—that man was intended by God to be immortal,—created for that purpose,—to live for ever if he behaved well, and in assurance of this immortality of which he was to be made partaker, the tree of life was planted within his view.

or at least of its importance to him,—still there can be no doubt, but that he would ultimately have been made fully acquainted with the secret, and the necessity there existed for availing himself of it. Created *to be* immortal, it will readily be allowed, is very different from having been actually immortal, for a gift *to be* bestowed, even if promised to be so, is far from the same, as if it had been given and received. A son may be born *to be* the heir of his father's estate, and his parent may for years intend that he shall be so; yet, on account of his not fulfilling a condition, or behaving ill, he may come to be disinherited, or at least kept out of his inheritance for a long time after the period when he would otherwise have become possessed of it; and in the meantime undergo great misery in consequence of disobedience. Such was the case with our first parents; they were created *to be* heirs of immortality, and probably also to enjoy this in another world, for it is not to be supposed that we shall now be better situated in this respect when we get to heaven, than if we had never sinned.

Bishop Gleig\* also holds that Adam was created mortal, although capable of immortality, and that some time elapsed between his creation and introduction into paradise,—two points which, however difficult they may be considered to prove, are yet more so to controvert, but this last is attempted by the Rev. Thomas Wilkinson,† in his discourse on the doctrine of original sin.

## B.

HAVING endeavoured to show in the first chapter of this work, that death in the inferior animals was not one of the consequences of the fall of man, I may notice a different opinion by the Rev. Thomas Scott, who, when commenting on part of the eighth chapter of the Romans, tells us that—“*the animal tribes are subject to pain and death through man's sin,*” which must mean that they were at first immortal, and so constructed as not to be liable to the bodily derangement which gives rise to pain, being intended also to remain

\* Of the Scottish Episcopal Church. See his Appendix to Stackhouse's Dissertation on the subject.

† Rector of Bulvan, Essex, and Curate of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

so, if Adam had not sinned, an assertion nowise to be deduced from the only historical authorities which could inform us of such a fact. The words of St. Paul, in the chapter referred to, would seem to intimate (if they allude to beasts in particular) that these shall yet be delivered from death—that is, shall become immortal at some future time; but the Greek word *κτίσις*, which is there rendered “*creature*,” has apparently in this passage rather a reference to man as a rational creature or work of creation, than to the lower orders of living creatures.

## C.

IN a note, page 59, I have quoted a passage from a Letter of Lord Byron's, showing that his Lordship had disbelieved in a future state, but I feel pleasure in proving, by several extracts from his Life by Moore, that my early companion afterwards changed this opinion, from a thorough conviction of being mistaken, but of this I was not before aware.

“It has been said that the immortality of the soul is a *grand* ‘*peut-être*’—but still it is a *grand* one. Every body clings to it—the stupidest, and dullest, and wickedest of human bipeds is still persuaded that he is immortal.” Vol. V. p. 86.

“There is nothing against the immortality of the soul in ‘Cain,’ that I can recollect. I hold no such opinions.” Vol. V. p. 308.

“Of the immortality of the soul, it appears to me that there can be little doubt, if we attend for a moment to the action of mind; it is in perpetual activity. I used to doubt of it, but reflection has taught me better. It acts also so very independent of body—in dreams for instance, incoherently and *madly*, I grant you, but still it is mind, and much more mind than when we are awake. Now that this should not act *separately* as well as jointly, who can pronounce? The Stoics, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, call the present state, ‘a soul which drags a carcass,’ a heavy chain, to be sure, but all chains being material, may be shaken off. How far our future life will be *individual*, or, rather, how far it will at all resemble our *present* existence, is another question.” \*Vol. VI. p. 257.



## D.

It is seldom that ladies write on metaphysical subjects, but there have been distinguished instances of their having done so with great ability. -An essay found among the papers of the celebrated but unfortunate Madame Roland, and written by her, treats of *the Soul*, and shows considerable depth of thought as well as justness of observation, as the following extracts will prove :—

“The soul is considered as a substance distinct from matter, because it has the power of performing actions which are not the properties of matter. It perceives, feels, compares, reflects, foresees, judges : nothing, of all that we know of matter, permits us to ascribe to it these faculties.”

“Closely united to the body, the soul receives from it the impression of external objects ; but it does not depend on the body in such a way that it cannot consult itself, and act according to its own knowledge, without always attending to the impulse conveyed by the senses.”

“The fibres of our nerves, distributed as so many small nets, terminate, on the one hand, in the skin at the extremities of our members, and, on the other, they all unite in the brain. When any thing strikes them externally, the impression is communicated to the brain, and, according to the different modifications which it experiences, the soul perceives and judges of the object that is the cause of them. But to explain *how* the soul sees these things, how ideas are formed in it, how a spiritual substance, distinct from the body, perceives what passes in another substance, these are things above our efforts, and which probably we can hope to know only in another state.”

“The soul is endowed, besides, with an active principle, which puts it in motion, and by which it determines to act or not, according as it judges proper ; this principle is *the will*.”

“It remains to be examined whether this part of ourselves survives the destruction of our body. We do not long doubt of this truth, when we admit that of the existence of a God ; the one implies the other.”

“The soul being a spirit, is not by its nature perishable like the body, by the disunion of its parts.”—“When we consider, besides, the wisdom of the first Author, who has put nothing useless in man, and that thirst of immortality which pervades every heart, what was a probability, becomes a proof of feeling. But the most substantial

proof of this truth results from the justness of God.”—“It is very usual, and even common, to see the wicked possess quietly the fruits of their rapine and of their crimes; virtue and vice are not then always rewarded or punished in this life according to the justice of a legislative God. There is therefore another state, another manner of being, another life, in short, where every one is dealt with according to his actions.”

Translated from the Works of Madame Roland, wife of the French Minister of the Interior.

This lady was guillotined in 1793, on hearing of which, her husband (who had escaped) killed himself.

## E.

IN further corroboration of the reasonings in page 290, (which show that every Christian Church assumes and has a right to judge its members by its own “*Articles of Faith*,” and to refuse a general appeal to the Scriptures,) the following extract of a speech by an eminent member of the Church of Scotland, Dr. Cook, will be found to place this point in a still plainer light:—

“In the Christian world there is a great diversity of sentiment with regard to what are the essential doctrines of the gospel. There are innumerable shades of Christian faith and opinion, and the purpose of an establishment is to collect into one body those who hold peculiar views, those views being, in their estimation, founded on the word of God. It was necessary then to embody in some document what were the doctrines of those selected from the great mass of Christian people, to state clearly and distinctly such doctrines, and when this was done, to hold language to the Christian world of this nature:—Here is our standard, here are our doctrines which we profess, we invite those who hold them to join with us,—we limit no man’s Christian liberty, we do not go out and compel any man into our tabernacle, but we say to those who think as we do, come amongst us; and if they do accept of the invitation, they come on the explicit condition which has been clearly and distinctly expressed. If it so happen, that any man should change his sentiments, we say to him—the gate is open, go forth to the general field of Christian labour.”

## F.

THE justness of the ideas conveyed by the following Epitaphs may be considered with reference to the reasonings in page 72, *et seq.*

## I.

*A little spirit slumbers here,  
Who to one heart was very dear ;  
Oh ! he was more than life or light,  
Its thought by day—its dream by night !  
The chill winds came—the young flower faded  
And died ;—the grave its sweetness shaded.  
Fair Boy ! thou should'st have wept for me,  
Not I have had to mourn o'er thee :  
Yet not long shall this sorrowing be—  
Those roses I have planted round,  
To deck thy dear sad sacred ground,  
When spring-gales next those roses wave,  
They'll blush upon thy mother's grave !*

*From a Tomb-Stone in an Irish Country Churchyard.*

## II.

*The Maid who in this grave is sleeping,  
Has left her young companions weeping ;  
And thoughts of her have plunged in sadness  
Hearts to whom they once gave gladness !  
Lovely in form—in mind excelling,  
A spirit pure in heavenly dwelling.  
She died—and we again shall never  
See one like her—now lost for ever !*

*From the modern Greek, on a Tomb-Stone  
in the Island of Zante.*

## III.

*Mother,—sweet Mother, thou canst never know  
That yearly thus I deck thy mossy bed  
With the first roses of the Spring that blow,  
And tears of fond affection shed.*

*Mother,—sweet Mother, tho' I knew thee not,  
I feel that one I love is buried here !  
And tho' this grave by others is forgot,  
To me it shall thro' life be dear—most dear.*

*From the French, in the Burying-ground of  
Mount Louis, in Paris.*

“ Oh ! who that gazes on the lights of life,  
 Man in his might, and woman in her bloom,  
 Can think, that after some brief years of strife,  
 We sink completely in the silent tomb !

“ Shall fears of senseless slumber then enthrall  
 The soul when death dissolves the form we see ?  
 O never, never, for our spirits shall  
 Burst then their bands and from earth's follies flee ! ”

ANON.

G. See p. 441.

As one most interesting point of inquiry in the foregoing pages, is the nature of our eternal and happy residence in another world, and as this our present one itself was once laid out as a delightful dwelling for sinless creatures in high favour with God, in communion with Him and the messengers of his will, it has already been hinted that our new earth and new heaven, wherein dwelleth righteousness, may not be so very dissimilar from some earthly scenes as many imagine. Several examples of beautiful places here have already been pointed out, and how they are seemingly curst for the sin of man, or at least for all their loveliness rendered far from blissful or happy abodes. The following is another striking illustration :—

“ We did not,” says Captain Skinner, in his *Excursions in India*, “ long keep possession of so magnificent a prospect, but lost it in our passage through a thick and beautiful wood of pines, interspersed with the richest and most varied fruit-trees. We seemed to have entered an enchanted garden, where the produce of Europe and Asia—indeed of every quarter of the world—was blended together. Apples, pears, and pomegranates—plaintains, figs, and apricots—limes and citrons—walnut and mulberry trees, grew in the greatest quantity, and with the most luxurious hue. Blackberries and raspberries tempted from the brows of the broken crags, while our path was strewn with strawberries. In every direction were blooming heather, violets, and jasmine, with innumerable rose trees in full bearing. It was a most lovely day, and birds sung from every branch ; the common dove and the kokila—the nightingale of Hindoo poets—cooed around, and, for the first time for many a year, I heard the notes of the blackbird ! ”

To the foregoing highly graphic description is added several others of beautiful spots and large tracts of country, where even our first parents might have delighted to reside, but all these now are shown by this author to be sadly blended with sources of pain and inconvenience. "We had entered the precinct of the most venomous little insect I had ever met with; it is a miniature wasp, scarcely larger than a sand-fly, with a green body, and a pair of forceps that inflict its wounds unmercifully. We have lost all chance of rest, and it is ludicrous in the highest degree to observe the effects of the bite upon the people. They break suddenly off, in whatever occupation they may be engaged; and, after jumping and beating themselves for a few moments, resume their work, in which, however, they were soon interrupted for more exercise. They are covered over with black spots, in which I am bidding fair to rival them—for these little insects never fail to leave their marks." In another place we are told that—"the accompaniments of heat, innumerable flies, have kept me at war all day, and the renewal of a stinging torture has driven us nearly frantic. The insect upon this occasion is larger than a wasp: they fly about in hundreds, and add to the torment of the former small insects, by the constant apprehension of a bite; for we can see them approach too plainly, and find it impossible to guard against them."

After considering, as we have done, the new or heavenly world for the accepted of God, we may, perhaps, apply the same general ideas of materiality, while imagining the everlasting abode of the wicked. That the scriptural descriptions—the fire and brimstone, may be in a great degree metaphorical,—that it is a vast orb involved in dreary darkness—heat—venomous reptiles—sterile rocks—barren wastes of sand;—where its inhabitants shall be strictly confined,—feel hunger and thirst, and all the malevolent passions—deprived of every pleasure—all hope excluded,—and, what would render the most beautiful place a miserable one—the very worst company.

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